MODERN ACTING

HELENA CHALMERS

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MODERN ACTING

By HELENA CHALMERS

MODERN ACTING
THE ART OF MAKE-UP
CLOTHES: ON AND OFF THE STAGE

MODERN ACTING

By

HELENA CHALMERS

INSTRUCTOR IN MAKE-UP, AMERICAN
ACADEMY OF DRAMATIC ARTS

ILLUSTRATED

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DEDICATED

TO THE MEMORY OF

FRANKLIN HAVEN SARGENT

WHO "RAISED THE CURTAIN"

FOR THE AUTHOR

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	Don't Act	1
II.	Speak Out	11
III.	Physical Requirements	16
IV.	Lines of Business	21
V.	Accomplishments and Education	24
VI.	A Graceful Body	28
VII.	An Expressive Body	35
VIII.	Vocal Quality	46
IX.	Things an Untrained Beginner Should Know	51
X.	Make-Up	63
XI.	Costume	77
XII.	Jargon of the Theatre	83
XIII.	Stage Business	89
XIV.	Directing	94
XV.	Props	110
XVI.	Lights	123
XVII.	Radio Broadcasting	132
XVIII.	For and Against	135
Index		145

ILLUSTRATIONS

DIAGRAM		PAGE
1.	Diagram of a popular style of modern theatre	53
2.	"Covering" another actor on the scene	54
3.	Keeping the picture unspoiled	55
4.	"Dressing the stage"	56
5.	The "fourth wall"	57
6.	Awaiting the entrance cue	58
7.	A bad exit	59
8.	A good exit	59
9.	Crossing back stage	60
10.	Altering the shape of the mouth	72
11.	A mistake in directing	100
12.	Equilibrium destroyed and attention decentralized	101
13.	A balanced picture	101
14.	An unbalanced stage	102
15.	Equilibrium established by a stage cross	102
16.	The conventionalities unobserved	103
17.	Timing action to the spoken word	104
18.	To avoid "covering" when seated	105
19.	Placing the side prop table	115
20.	Scene and property plot for "The Wisdom of the Serpent"	119
21.	Light plot for "The Wisdom of the Serpent," Acts I and II	125
22.	Light plot for "The Wisdom of the Serpent," Act III	127

CHAPTER I

DON'T ACT

FOR young people who approach a dramatic career with a modesty suggestive of the hesitant angels, there is much to learn before a professional appearance should be attempted. "Don't act" is the cry which will greet the startled ears of beginners, and to master the art of not doing so and yet develop into the famous Thespians of their dreams, will become their absorbing problem.

The fashion of the day demands naturalness in plays and a certain acting ease on the part of the player; one might almost term it inaction. Providing they have intelligence, stage aspirants who come from the ranks of society are apt to adapt themselves rapidly to the state of mind which tends to body ease. To their aid comes an inbred *savoir-faire* which responds to the drilling that will result in a smooth performance, devoid of nervous tension.

Yiddish types and products of eastern Europe who hail from New York's East Side are lacking in social background. They present a sharp contrast and are much harder to train, ease and relaxation not being their heritage. Possessed of strident voices, heaving shoulders and bodies bound by tense muscles, they can, however, by intensive application to technique, acquire

controlled physical organisms and voices capable of expressing every shade of emotion. These attainments, in conjunction with their natural fire and dramatic ability, often carry them to high places in the world of the theatre.

The beginner who can master the trick of making no apparent effort has that which the modern stage demands.

To obtain this, an unremitting use of the intelligence is obligatory. You, as a beginner, must concentrate on your part, thus eliminating fear which tenses the entire body. Ease of action is impossible when the brain grows numb with fright. While in view of the audience, you must endeavor to live your part every instant, the first step toward which would mean giving undivided attention to all that is taking place on the stage. If absorbed in the action, you will completely forget the watching public beyond the footlights and become unafraid. Thus, you will achieve ease without trying to act it.

You, as the actress, must never think, "How do I look? Now I must cross the stage; now I sit; I did that awkwardly; my voice is a bit hoarse, etc." Self-criticism will render you self-conscious, amateurish and out of the part. If you had first made yourself complete mistress of both body and voice, sitting down on a chair and saying, "Do give me some tea," would occasion you no more concern than attempting the same action in your own living room.

In order to live the scene, it is first necessary to "get into character," the term used for the transition

from himself to the person to be portrayed, made by any professional before making an entrance on the stage. The time allowed and the actual spot at which this change takes place vary with the temperament. One actress, an extreme case, never permits any one to speak to her in the dressing room because she is "getting into character." To the great majority, this moment comes while standing in the wings, waiting for an entrance cue. There are some who approach at the last moment with a jest on the lips, then open a door and present a picture of woe to the audience.

On one occasion, when Mr. David Belasco was calling at the Sargent School, a few of the pupils were asked to read for him. An ambitious, beautiful and not untalented girl attempted some lines of Julia's in "The Hunchback," those beginning "He's fond of me." Made very irritable by her delivery, the wizard of our present stage indulged in the most scathing criticism and launched into the last lines of the speech himself, "Summer or winter, frost or rain. I've seen the snow upon the level of the hedge, yet there was Master Walter." At this point, in a frenzy of emotion, the tears streamed down his cheeks. This was the quickest and most remarkable example of "getting into character" I have ever seen. Dramatic ability and spontaneity cannot be [illegible]arated nor regulated by a foot rule and a time clock.

It would be absurd for any one to contend that an actor could be so lost in his part that, while in the midst of an impassioned speech, he would be incapable of recognizing a familiar face in the wings, or of hear-

ing and understanding a call of "fire." There is the subconscious brain ever in control, otherwise murder might actually be committed, which in these days of the popular mystery play, would greatly tax our already overcrowded court calendars. Creation in all forms of art is absorbing; nevertheless, the painter reaches for a tube of color when his palette is empty, although his eye scarcely leaves the canvas; the musician picks up pen or pencil to jot down the next few notes while he continues to hum and, if seated at the piano, touch the keys with his other hand. It might almost be termed an undertone of mental control that, in moments of inspiration, keeps a great artist from flying off to worlds unknown.

In "getting into character," you put yourself in the mood of the first scene. This continues until something, such as the entrance of another player, changes it. A new scene is then made, and, probably, just as one reacts to people in real life, your mood will alter somewhat. Your brain and heart must be in constant touch with the surrounding characters. If not keenly alive to them, all spontaneity will be lost, for an unchanging mood inevitably results in a dull, flat performance.

Lines, of course, are mastered long before the first night. If living the part, you need not think of them. Between speeches listen to every word uttered by the other characters. Good actors are good listeners. They react intelligently in facial expression or required movement, thus giving sympathetic response which helps to build up a scene. This is what professionals

mean when they say, "Ardsley is so easy to play to," or "Milton's such a stick."

You will then find that the correct lines follow on the cue. To sit or stand trying to remember the next speech will put you instantly out of the scene, for it is impossible to be two people at once. Proverbially bad are the actors who never attempt anything more than committing to memory their own cues, lines and business.

The professional does not wait for a "prompt." If he "dries up" (the actor's term for that awful moment during which the brain suddenly goes blank), the gap must be bridged. Either the stricken player, after the passing of the few seconds of utter vacuity which seem to last an eternity, ad libs, working down to a cue, or his partner in the scene assists him. Beginners will not be long in recognizing that the more they know of the other characters' lines, the greater will be their feeling of safety. Many a capable actor has been able, through his knowledge of a floundering player's part, to ask a question which helped pull him out of the morass.

Such losses of memory are more apt to take place during a run than on a first night, when every one is keyed up. The actor may have some outside worry on his mind and not be wholly in the part. He may have seen something distracting in the wings, or allowed his attention to wander to the audience. An amateur once requested that the stage hands remove themselves from their positions about the proscenium arch, insisting that their presence interfered with her

getting into her part. Veteran stage hands, at once the keenest and most blasé of critics, fancy they know more about acting than do the players. The larger the crowd peering from any available peephole, the greater the admiration denoted and the more flattered the actor should be. The beginner at a first night should expect this and not be disconcerted.

Cues must be picked up quickly or the action will slacken and the audience grow inattentive. Time the breath and speech so that the first word follows immediately on the last of the cue. In scenes which require a rapid tempo it is permissible to break in on the lines of another character who will return the trick. In this way a scene is built up quickly to a climax. Consider animated or excited talk in real life. We cut out sentences and break in on an argument or quarrel, politeness being thrust aside. "Will you let me finish?" figures largely in such scenes.

In endeavoring to pick up cues rapidly, remember that it is a law of the theatre that a laugh must never be "cut." Nothing will so quickly arouse an actor's injured feelings; it will also tend to kill the scene. If the spectators become hilarious over the cue line of a player's speech, they want to be given a chance to enjoy themselves. In this way the house warms up and becomes more responsive to whatever follows. When another actor on the scene commences to speak on the cue, the result is either that his speech is entirely drowned out by the noise of the laugh, or that the audience, anxious to hear what follows, chokes back its laugh and, also, its enthusiasm. Unless born actors

with a keen sense of audience psychology, it is often hard for beginners to acquire this trick of humoring those out front by not continuing until the laugh starts to die away. You may rest assured, however, that, at his first opportunity, an actor thus affronted will greet you icily, with, "You killed my laugh!"

It should be kept in mind that characters who are going through a daily routine of work, their brains probably actively engaged with something else, are not noticeably lively. Maids and butlers are unobtrusive; in fact, good ones are like well-oiled machines. In such parts, while performing their usual jobs, you must not appear self-conscious and possessed with an overpowering desire to "act." The same would apply to stenographers, workmen, etc. Some plays introduce scenes in which such characters are caught off duty; then their whole attitude changes and they become spontaneous human beings.

It may be a digression, but the "talkies" are considered by many such a menace to the theatre that it seems not amiss to observe that, in their present stage of development, picking up cues is sometimes a noticeably slow affair unless the players have been recruited from the stage. In order to register the action of the movies, a more retarded tempo than that of the stage has always been demanded. To insure clarity, protracted pauses in speech may be deemed necessary; or is it that the directors think an English-speaking people require a long time to digest mentally the spoken word? It reminds one of the old days when the operator left

the printed caption on the screen until most of the audience had not only read but memorized it.

You should focus only on one thought at a time, never anticipating what is to follow. As the actor, you know that a suicide is about to be attempted or a murder committed, but the character does not. The latter is being led on and on, until—bang! the climax!

Making a good exit has always been dear to the actor's heart. In the "palmy" days when Shakespeare and "The Black Crook" were both fashionable, these exits were all timed. For instance, Romeo would say, "Hence will I to my ghostly father's cell, his help to crave" (this while walking toward the exit) "and" (stopping and swinging the weight to the rear leg) "my dear hap" (facing the audience) "to tell!" (with the up stage hand held aloft and, at the same time, stepping out with the up stage leg and leaving the scene on a run). "They have their exits," wrote the Bard of human beings and he saw to it that his fellow-actors were well supplied. The old-timers made the most of the opportunities offered. Nowadays a modern version is arranged and the director will have all the positions so planned that the actor is brought near his exit before speaking the final line, which, although given in a most natural way, the player takes great care "to get over." (In theatrical parlance, this expression signifies that a line or piece of business has been delivered or enacted with telling effect on the audience.)

If the character speaks the final line from the center of the stage, he leaves it either on a run or walk, which is usually accelerated when very near the exit. In

"Olympia," Laura Hope Crews, a symphony in green velvet and emeralds, her body magnificently poised, strode from stage center to the door in a royal and unforgetable fashion. To slacken the pace while in view of the audience would not only kill the effect but break the illusion. When making a slow, tragic exit, there are few actors who can resist a slight pause in the doorway, a heave of the shoulders or some extra touch that will keep the eye of the audience still intrigued, and it is in just such instances that we discern the line between theatrical and natural acting.

Pauses, correctly timed, are invaluable. Some actors are past masters at knowing when to arrest a movement or break a speech. Once "the house" is "with" an actor (and this means that he has won its approval) he can, while making a pause in dialogue or soliloquy, hold it with an expressive face or a bit of perfect pantomime. In strained situations in real life, pauses occur constantly. Therefore, they are more telling in serious plays than in comedies which require rapid action with little or no slowing up.

When playing a long, heavy, emotional rôle, don't wear yourself out too soon; beware of anticlimaxes. Above all things, in a long speech tending to a big finish, don't hurry. You will lose breath and your speech will become jumbled. Create a tempo that the audience will think is speedy. Commence moderately, quietly, using restraint; then build up and up, giving in to your emotion more and more, in a constant crescendo until you completely let go and reach the climax. Never labor and never be noisy; think of every word

you are saying. A voice shouting lines will not move an audience, but your heart and brain, keenly sensitive, living the part and meaning every word uttered, will win emotional response.

By using intelligence, not muscle and nerves, physical repose is the more quickly attained. Keep the brain in continual contact with those in the scene. The resulting mental condition or mood then becomes a natural reaction. The audience is swayed by what they feel is taking place within you. Any one not an idiot can be drilled to perform the outside movements of a part, which accounts largely for the emptiness of most amateur performances.

While one minute of expressive pantomime is by some considered preferable to ten minutes of talk, it is a good rule never to make an indefinite motion. Silly, wooden gestures come from a mind not in harmony with the scene, while moving the feet or taking unnecessary steps can kill it. Repose and a cool brain are not suggested by fluttering the hands or fiddling with buttonholes. While others are talking, be careful not to grow restless; this may distract the attention of the spectators. Get in the part and keep there. Help to work up a climax, one situation after another. Remember you must live the scene in order to create an illusion which will carry the audience with you into the Land of Make-believe.

CHAPTER II

SPEAK OUT

ALL singing teachers talk much of voice placing, some with only a vague idea of what it's all about. The elocution teacher claims to "place" this marvelous medium of expression, often with sad results. The boy or girl born with a clear, strong voice plus dramatic instinct will, when placed on a stage, speak out for the size of the theatre, easily and naturally. Against these comparatively few born speakers, a whole army of stage aspirants require voice building and placing. After months of training some are still unable to project a vocal tone adequate to meet the demands of a large auditorium. However gifted otherwise, such young people should be discouraged and advised to seek other professions.

Various causes contribute to this condition, the main one being often a lack of vitality, without which there can be no theatrical career. Frequently, the fault lies in shirking the hard grind of vocal study. How foolish this is, when successful actors and actresses take pleasure in such exercise. Back stage, before a performance, sonorous voices quoting from some dramatist are commonly heard issuing from dressing rooms, just as trills and scales are from those of singers before concerts and operatic performances. An actor glories in his voice.

It is to him a delicate and prized instrument upon which he can play a tune that will wring the heart of his audience.

The trained voice of a professional of experience is the most melodious in the world.

Again, there may be volume of voice but defective articulation, which results in sound without meaning; in other words, the brain and lips do not coördinate. When conversing off the stage the intelligence is constantly used, every word coming home to the listener in consequence. During a performance, if you start to recite lines from memory without thought of what the words are intended to connote, your speech instantly becomes blurred. The voice dies off on the last words of a sentence, also on final syllables. Try saying a sentence of five or ten words, as in ordinary conversation, and note how the volume of sound is sustained to the end. Perfect articulation is obligatory; without it the actor becomes inaudible. To slur a word is not good English. The audience is paying to hear every word uttered, and, unless they do, you are not earning your salary.

Projection of the voice is accomplished by speaking forward toward the teeth. An imaginary spectator astride the center point of the balcony rail was long the target of the player. There are a few obsolete playhouses still standing in New York in which the auditorium is very deep, with the front of the balcony extending far back in a horseshoe. Modern theatres are wider and shallower, the balcony rail being straightened and brought in much closer proximity to the stage.

The Century Theatre, originally intended for grand opera, presented a startling contrast to the form used in the more antiquated Metropolitan Opera House. After its erection, theatre building underwent a revolution. The actor was obliged to send his voice to a more remote spot, the center of the balcony in most cases serving his purpose much better. This projecting of the voice is called "speaking out for the theatre."

Quality is lacking in many voices. The French describe it as "timbre." The stage voice should be colorful. The hoarse, empurpled notes of passion are not the clear, bell-like tones of a young girl. That greatest of dramatic teachers, the late Franklin H. Sargent, once said to me: "If you could only teach them to paint their voices as you can their faces." And again he remarked: "No actor can pronounce the word 'love'!" So the only possible way to paint a word, is to *feel* its meaning.

Never stand on the stage reciting lines and listening, at the same time, to the music of your voice. When the brain directs, a singsong delivery is impossible.

A voice possessing personality has a more seductive charm for an audience than a beautiful face. No one denies that Otis Skinner, Ethel Barrymore and Jane Cowl are good to look upon, but their voices, and those belonging to many other professionals, are more haunting. The rich beauty of Julia Marlowe's speech has only recently, through her retirement, become history; there are those who can still recall the witchery of Ada Rehan's voice and the golden tones of the Divine Sarah.

Comedians often owe much of their fame to a pecu-

liarity of voice which instantly endears them to the public. James T. Powers is a conspicuous example.

Alexander Moissi stands out as a marvelous exponent of apparently effortless projection. As Oberon in "A Midsummer Night's Dream," he dominated a great audience which literally hung on his far-reaching, low tones. In the vast Century Theatre it was seemingly unnecessary for him to raise his voice, which goes to prove that, in order to be heard, it is not essential to shout.

Southern women with soft voices often experience difficulty in projecting them for the theatre. This, added to the usual struggle to eliminate dialect, has discouraged many a novice. As to the accent, the trouble with most Southerners is that they dote on it so that the thought of separation is like sacrilege. No manager will cast a boy with strong Southern speech for anything but a North Carolina mountaineer. Plays such as "Rope" are scarce; and actors, even if they have gentle Southern voices, must eat.

It is a curious fact, but the charming and cultivated people of our Southern states never seem to realize how they distort pure English. I remember my first meeting with that gifted young actor, Sterling Holloway. In answer to one or two questions he had responded in true Georgian accent. So I observed: "You're from the South." "Yas'm," he replied; then, tossing his wondrous red-gold locks: "Haow'd yeou know Ah was from the Sa-a-o-u-th?" Less than two years later he played a part in a Theatre Guild production without the slightest trace of accent, from which I inferred that he had

discovered why I knew he was from the South; but it proved that accent and dialect could be eliminated.

Westerners have the burring *r* to handicap them: they retort that New Yorkers lack it. There is, of course, the careless and more or less tough-sounding "Manhattanese." Against that, the captain of an English liner once told me he had great difficulty in distinguishing between the British and New Yorkers of the upper classes, the best people speaking without any accent at all. Many fashionables affect an "English" which strangely suggests the Cockney.

The pronunciation of certain words varies in England and America. When appearing in a play dealing with people of the former country, the correct English usage should be followed. Books are procurable giving these variations up-to-date.

CHAPTER III

PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS

NOTHING but actual collapse ever prevents an actor from entering on his cue. Toothaches, colds, racking pains in various parts of the body—all are soothed as with an anodyne, not only by the glowing lights playing on that square beyond the wings and the pulsing throb which emanates from the black pit beyond, but by the actor's transition into another character.

However, it is inadvisable for any one suffering from ill health to attempt a theatrical career. The life of the theatre is strenuous; and the nearer stage aspirants come to physical perfection, the better.

Neither should any one with striking physical deformities seek a stage career. Of course, if you are bow-legged or knock-kneed and possessed of the necessary makings of a comedian, you may find these defective limbs an asset. Never dream, however, of playing Hamlet.

While all forms of athletics contribute to physical grace, they should not be indulged in to the extent of overdeveloped muscles. Girls with swimming records have enormous shoulders and upper arms. Silhouetted against the back drop on a stage, the great

breadth of shoulder dwarfs the head and the figure becomes top-heavy.

Dancing, invaluable in acquiring freedom of the body, distorts the calves and broadens the feet when practiced excessively. A dancer, cast for a part which called for bare feet, revealed the ugliest pair a pretty girl ever stood on; in fact, so bad that it was necessary to replace the stockings.

Round shoulders must be made straight. *Nothing is so repellent to an audience as a stooping boy or girl.* This condition, together with stiffened muscles, can be eliminated by exercises. (See Chapter VI.)

A cast in the eye, if properly treated with paint, is not discernible by the audience, but, to the girl hunting for a job, such an affliction will prove an insurmountable drawback.

The number of stage aspirants (and this includes men) possessed of a lisp is amazing. There is nothing an audience more quickly notices and ridicules. All trace of this silly speech should be eradicated before a stage career is entered upon. (See Chapter VIII.)

Those who stutter and stammer would appear hopelessly handicapped. The truth is, as far as the actual speaking of lines goes, they can not only be helped but the impediment entirely done away with. The same is true of the Southern and the tough New York speech. But alas, when away from the stage and personal thoughts come crowding for expression, back will come the stuttering speech, the hesitation and the mispronounced words.

Apropos of the two dialects just mentioned, one

Southern boy, the morning after playing a Bostonian with a near-Harvard accent, greeted a friend with, "Ha-ow ah yeuw?" in true Southern form, while another, a product of New York's Yiddish-American citizenry, after playing an English lord without a slip ejaculated gleefully after the curtain fell, and all restraint was cast aside, "The foist time I entered," etc.

The beginner should carefully examine the face for defects, remembering that off-stage comeliness is not always indicative of on-stage good looks. Certain plain faces with well-formed bones are often transformed into undreamed beauty by the application of paint and the play of light.

Weak, receding chins, no matter how lovely the upper part of the face, have rung the curfew on the hopes of many a stage aspirant. Large jawbones are especially ugly on a girl. Eyes, deep set with overhanging brows, are hard to bring out, particularly with strong overhead lighting; when placed close to the nose, the face is narrowed, creating a crafty look not desirable in a juvenile.

The plastic surgeon is rampant in the land, holding out sweet promises of rejuvenation in the way of face-lifting. While young people have no need of this, the owners of exceedingly large noses are tempted to turn to them for help. Only reliable surgeons should be consulted and patronized. Remember, this organ is essential to the breathing system and the latter means much to the actor. Only a certain amount of excess bone and cartilage can be safely removed. The operation is not a pleasant one to undergo, but has turned some girls

into beauties, albeit with the bone a bit of character seems to have been eliminated. One girl, on whom this feature closely resembled those seen on the portraits of early American statesmen, was restrained by her family who protested she would no longer have "the family nose."

Clever surgeons can build the profile to a better line when its owner suffers from a deficiency of bone about the bridge. There are many who cannot afford the large fees demanded. One exceptionally gifted girl, whose nose was flattened almost flush with the eye socket, was enabled by the use of nose-putty to build up a bridge and delicate tip which resulted in a million-dollar profile resembling that of a movie star. From the front she became beautiful. However, this only made her disappointment the more cruel, as interviewing managers while decorated in this fashion was, of course, impossible. With producers, seeing is believing and this noseless aspirant, unable to afford a plastic surgeon, was ruthlessly pushed aside and, in spite of her talent, obliged to forego a stage career.

A birthmark, a fire-scarred or pock-marked skin, completely and effectually hidden at night by make-up in the theatre, must face the managers "as is" by day. These busy men have no time to visualize what paint and lighting can effect. They also consider from the box-office viewpoint, and the good looker will always be given the chance in preference to the girl with a marred face.

Prominent ears, which on a man cannot be covered and are especially noticeable on the screen, are success-

fully treated and made to lie back against the head in true patrician style.

If the stage aspirant would only carefully consider his or her physical qualifications before attempting work in the theatre many a heartache and ultimate disappointment would be averted.

CHAPTER IV

LINES OF BUSINESS

YOUR height will become a matter of paramount importance in casting. It has also much to do with the line of business to be followed. Girls scarcely five feet high aspire to tragic rôles; boys with long, gangling legs or short, fat ones combined with funny faces desire to "do" Macbeth. You may have the features of an Apollo but if, even with built-up heels and lifts in your shoes, you only measure up to five feet three, cherish no dreams of playing Romeo. Unless your Juliet were at least two inches shorter than yourself and the balance of the company correspondingly short in stature, the picture presented to the audience would be all wrong.

Leading men in the theatre are of an average height of five feet ten inches; leading women, about five feet six or seven, or a little under. The actress playing the "lead" is usually the tallest woman in the company. An exception is made to this if the ingenue part is the leading or star rôle, when, in order to emphasize youth, the remaining female characters are played by larger women.

Other lines of business are variously designated as second lead, juvenile, character, comedy, utility, etc.

In casting, the stage picture is ever in the producer's

eye; a few inches on or off your height may spoil it. Those beginners who are neither too short nor too tall are likely to have the best luck in securing engagements and, as a rule, are cast for small bits.

Comedians and comediennes are born; a flair for eccentric comedy is rare. You, famous as the village cut-up, may be a frightful flop when confronted by an audience. To a professional, such a type is known as a "dressing room comedian." In most cases, the born funny man, when a beginner, considers himself a tragedian, but time works wonders with him.

The exceptionally tall girl appears ridiculous as a maid unless she plays the part as eccentric comedy. No matter how gifted, hers is the hardest lot, her chances being few on account of the actors, among whom six-footers are rare. Overtopping them, she is not only rendered awkward but the picture is spoiled. She can, if she has ability, turn to character work, but here again she will meet with difficulty. Character parts are, as a matter of course, the natural heritage of passé leading women, ingenues, etc., and are assigned to them by the managers. Through unusually strong influence a few very tall girls have been started in the rank of leading women to exceptionally tall male stars or have been launched on stellar careers of their own, the latter always a hazardous and most inadvisable experiment.

The very tiny girl should be resigned. Let her make it her business to look cute and childish until face-lifting becomes a positive necessity.

For men, the field is not so crowded. Nevertheless, without influence openings are hard to find in spite of

the fact that plays are apt to have more male than female parts. Young men who can play a small part and run a stage are not too plentiful and every show requires a stage manager. He will be of importance in the company and invested with much authority and responsibility.

CHAPTER V

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND EDUCATION

AN actor can count up his salary when the Ghost walks, without the aid of the higher mathematics.

Bachelors of Art from the best universities in the country aspire to stage careers but are frequently found utterly lacking in dramatic ability and personality. It is questioned whether a college education is of use to the actor or actress. Unless it has taught them to think better—the ultimate aim of all schooling—such learning will be of no avail, for there is no hope for an actor who does not use his brain. In the theatre of to-day, intelligence is more and more in demand. When it is combined with a background of culture and refinement one's chances are doubled.

You should have a wide knowledge of books. The more traveled you are, the better, for life will have been observed among all classes of people and nationalities, and their varying traits and faces studied. The more conversant you are with foreign languages, the easier it will be to deliver a line in French with the correct accent, or to give the right tempo to one in Italian. These tongues are attempted by very prominent actors with these details not mastered. A knowledge of dialects is also useful, especially to the player who essays character parts.

A good singing voice, well trained, is always a desideratum. Countless parts call for at least a strumming acquaintance with the piano; many demand an accomplished performer. Managers, in preference to having two pianos, one in view of the audience on which the actor pretends to play and another behind the scenery manipulated by a good performer, will cast the professional who is a pianist.

Like artists in other lines, actors are apt to be gifted in more ways than one. A talent for drawing and painting is common. Entering a dark theatre, some member of the company is heard playing Chopin in its shadows. A prominent actor, one of America's greatest, stepped out of the set on a movie lot while lights were being adjusted, slipped onto a piano stool and played Liszt while the Italian studio fiddler stood entranced, tears in his eyes.

Dancing is of the utmost importance in acquiring bodily grace and should be studied in all its forms. Many professionals work at dancing and fencing, the latter excellent for body control, long after they have become well-established players.

A good, old-fashioned knowledge of plain sewing should be at the command of every actress. Maids are for those who have arrived and many are the rips and tears which are hastily pinned up by girls who actually brag that they cannot manage the simplest stitches. The company may possess neither maid nor wardrobe woman. To appear in pinned-up clothes is not earning one's salary. Besides this knowledge of plain sewing, an actress ought to have an inborn gift that will enable

her to design an entire costume if necessary. She should understand color harmony, be able to place flowers, ornaments or jewels where they will most enhance her gown or add to the beauty of her hair. An aptitude for designing, and also for rearranging old costumes will be of great advantage while playing a season in stock.

The player's education, comprehensively covering a knowledge of how things are done in all walks of life, should not shy at menial occupations such as cooking, sweeping, washing, ironing, chopping wood and the like. Every actress should realize that the women in the audience are watching her every move in the stage kitchen she is mistress of; yet many a novice will calmly pick up a kettle or pot from a supposedly hot stove without a holder or cloth in her hand. There is a regular method of procedure in ironing a shirt and hot irons are not left standing on its bosom by the experienced laundress. Apples and potatoes are pared in a certain way, rapidly, and with an expert touch; simpering beginners think it redounds to their credit to display a vast ignorance of all such business even after rehearsing for several weeks a part demanding an exhibition of like skill.

Young girls, cast as maids, are often called upon to set a table. It is amazing how few can lay a cloth. The down stage side of this must always run parallel to the floor. If it appears to be climbing toward the scenery on the prompt side all the women in the house will be aware of it. Mr. Sargent once remarked, "That girl plays a maid so well that I know exactly

what her wages are." Cooks, laundresses, maids and butlers repeat their respective forms of labor many times during the day; they are as much at home in the performance of these daily tasks as is their mistress when receiving guests in the drawing-room; yet how many young men are there who can play a butler or footman and not appear ill at ease?

Before playing in society dramas, if the niceties of polite life are not yours by inheritance, study them. Knives, forks and napkins must be used in the correct way; a spoon will stand being separated from the cup. Certain kinds of foods call for an especial way of handling. If the social background has not been of the best, the young actor should study the manners and bearing of the socially elect, wherever and whenever he can make the opportunity.

CHAPTER VI

A GRACEFUL BODY

A GRACEFUL carriage is of paramount importance to the actor. Slouched shoulders and a caved-in chest, hips thrust forward, with the abdomen protruding, are not good to look upon. Learn to stand correctly poised before attempting anything else.

In order to attain this, the backbone must assume, as nearly as possible, a vertical line. Hold the chest high, inflating the upper ribs and at the same time drawing in the lower. Do not hold the shoulders up. On the contrary, allow them to hang relaxed. The head, supported by the straight vertebra, will rest in a normal position. There must be no thrusting forward of the chin; neither must it be pulled severely back, which might result in the appearance of a double chin. The weight of the body, which should be held well off the hips, is supported on the rear foot, with the other resting slightly in advance. When the backbone is held straight, there will be no inward curve at the waistline.

Movement being the base of nearly all expression, the physical organism of the actor must be trained to reveal the most subtle shades of meaning. From the many exercises that could be enumerated, I have selected a few which I know to be of outstanding value in acquiring poise and grace. From the start, all exercises

should be practiced with regard to the element of human sensibility indicated. Each part of the body reacts to some particular emotion; therefore every movement should suggest a flow of feeling from the heart through the brain.

The first step consists in overcoming stiffness or weakness of the muscles by the practice of relaxing and controlling exercises. They are indispensable for the acquisition of freedom and poise, or perfect balance, which results only when all parts of the body coördinate and act in complete unison.

It is advisable to commence with simple movements. Try the following:

1. While standing with the body correctly poised, toss the arms in various directions. If a sensation of lightness, exhilaration or abandon results, all the better.
2. Swing the body to the right and the arms to the left. Reverse the action and repeat several times. This should create a feeling of repulsion.
3. While standing allow the body to sink down heavily; the consciousness of weight creeping over it will induce a despondent, tragic mood. Elevate the torso and head and experience one of buoyancy, of comedy.
4. Stand with the weight on the left leg; move the free foot and turn to the right. Reverse the action. When this becomes second nature, you will step out gracefully.
5. Approach a chair and sit; rise and step away from it with the free foot.
6. Practice walking in a straight line, the chest up and leading, the arms swinging easily.

In conjunction with the above, it is advisable to develop mental control of all parts of the body, thus insuring balance and harmony of movement.

1. (*a*) Stand with the feet placed rather far apart, the weight on one leg.
   (*b*) Transfer the weight to the left foot, then to the right, at the same time carrying the hip well out to the side. Reverse the action and repeat.
   (*c*) While moving the hip to the right, raise the right arm slowly, holding it well extended. Reverse the action, using the left hip and arm. Repeat the movement back and forth a number of times. Thus, your right arm will descend as you elevate the left and vice versa.
2. (*a*) Stand with the heels together, the weight on both feet.
   (*b*) Sway slowly forward, then backward, bending only at the ankles.
   (*c*) When the body is swaying forward, rise slowly on the toes, inhaling with the upward movement. Exhale on lowering and bending backward.
3. (*a*) Stand with the weight on the left leg, the right foot in advance.
   (*b*) Sway the right hip forward in an oblique movement until the weight rests on the forward foot. Reverse the action.
   (*c*) Sway the right hip forward, at the same time raising the right arm until the head rests against it. The palm of the hand should be turned away from the body in this and also in the reverse movement, which will terminate with the raised left arm resting behind the ear.
   (*d*) In raising the arm, let the wrist lead, the hand hanging fully relaxed. On lowering the arm, the wrist glides downward, the hand following devoid of all stiffness.

(*e*) Practice raising and lowering the arms separately. Then combine the movements with those of the hips. It will soon become very easy to lower one arm with its wrist leading, as the other is being correctly raised.

Too much importance cannot be attached to this action of the wrist. Without it, graceful gestures of the hand and arm are impossible.

Above all, try to realize the different feelings suggested by changing the position of the body. For instance, swaying toward an object implies attraction to it, the reverse action, dislike.

Most beginners will discover that they are the owners of bodies and joints which have become stiffened from either abuse or disuse. Rounded backs, rigid shoulders and the like do not make for stage beauty. To correct all such defects is of first importance. The method followed consists in allowing a part of the body to hang from an adjacent joint until all sensation, save that of weight, disappears. Near-by muscles are then agitated so that the suspended limb or a division of it, such as the forearm, hand, etc., is jerked back and forth, up and down, or about in a circle.

Each limb may be lifted to its full height and then allowed to drop limply as it yields to the earth's gravity. By withdrawing all control, the entire body will slump to the floor as in a "stage fall."

Relaxing exercises are of especial value for the hands, elbows and shoulders. However, no beginner can afford to shirk any of the work suggested in this chapter, muscle-bound bodies being far too common.

1. *To relax the hand*
   (*a*) Hang the hand upon the wrist joint until it loses all sensation save that of weight.
   (*b*) By a quick, energetic shaking of the forearm, jerk the hand up and down many times, then sideways, and in a circle.
2. *To relax the elbow*
   (*a*) Raise the elbow joints to a level with the shoulder.
   (*b*) Drop the forearms, allowing them to vibrate with the fall. The palms of the hands will be turned backward. Repeat this several times.
3. *To relax the arm*
   (*a*) Raise the arms as high as possible at the sides with the elbows straight and the hands pendant, then drop them as though paralyzed.
   (*b*) Pivot the whole body from the ankles as one mass without joints, so that the arms will whirl about the body in a circle.
4. *To relax the hips*
   (*a*) Stand on the edge of some raised surface with the body resting on the right foot; allow the left foot to hang over suspended by its full weight.
   (*b*) Move the body so that the free leg will swing back and forth, from side to side and with a circular movement.

A relaxed state of the body insures ease and repose. In practicing, gradually develop the movement of the limbs into an expressive action. Notice the flow of feeling through the body, the most direct form of gesture starting in the torso and moving outward through the limbs to their extremities, or vice versa. The torso, when in repose, acts as a central office directing the action of the limbs, movement having passed into them.

It is most essential that the arm, by which so much meaning is conveyed, be carefully trained before gestures are attempted.

You will find the following exercise most conducive to grace of gesture. Try it slowly, mechanically, and with great precision, gradually increasing the rapidity until the movement becomes one of undulating beauty.

(*a*) Stand with the arms hanging easily at the sides.
(*b*) Turn the palm of the hand so that it faces forward, the forearm following.
(*c*) Bend the palm until it faces upward.
(*d*) Bend the arm at the elbow until the finger tips touch the shoulder.
(*e*) Raise the elbow until on a level with the shoulder, at the same time permitting the forearm to turn facing downward with the hand hanging relaxed on the wrist.
(*f*) Drop the elbows to the side, letting the hand swing forward on the wrist with palm facing downward, the forefinger pointing forward.
(*g*) Carry the arm straight out in front of the body, giving it a spiral twist which will result in having the forearm and palm face upward with the fingers pointing forward.
(*h*) Reverse the entire action.

This should be tried with each arm in turn until you become sufficiently expert to use both at once. Faithful practice will insure a grace that is truly serpentine. In fact, it is the arm movement used by Egyptian and Oriental dancers.

In gesturing, the movement flows through the arm, becoming emphatic at its extremities, the finger tips.

These are projected or thrown into an attitude of the hand (see Chapter VII) until, the point being made, relaxation follows.

The turning of the palm on the wrist and the opening of the fingers can be adapted to the smallest gestures which are better suited to the strictly modern society drama. However, unless completely master of the large, no one can attempt fine gestures.

The next exercise is particularly beneficial in producing a free, sweeping action of the arm in gesturing.

(*a*) Stand in poise with the weight on the left leg, the right arm hanging easily.

(*b*) Raise the right shoulder, turning the arm inwards toward the body with the palm of the hand facing the right.

(*c*) Raise the forearm upward with the hand following, until the latter rises level with the left shoulder, at the same time relaxing the right shoulder.

(*d*) Bend the wrist to the right and bring the whole arm forward until it rests with palm facing upward and fingers straight.

(*e*) Turn the arm over, raising the hand at the wrist, its palm facing forward.

(*f*) With the wrist leading (the right hand still bent upward) bring the gradually relaxed arm and hand back to the original position.

CHAPTER VII

AN EXPRESSIVE BODY

THE dramas of Æschylus, Sophocles and Euripides are not considered box-office "wows" these days, yet no player can ever appear successfully in Greek tragedy without being completely master of the art of sweeping gestures. These should also be at the command of the actor performing in plays of the romantic type and in those of Shakespeare.

Aside from its enabling you to view your arm extended the utmost possible distance without becoming frightened, you will find the exercise mentioned at the close of the preceding chapter invaluable for developing freedom and grace of movement and, at the same time, will begin to realize a flow of feeling extending from shoulder to finger tips. Imagine a dramatic situation and, while performing the exercise, give sway to the emotion inspired, terminating the action in an expressive attitude of the hand.

Unless impelled by an inward feeling flowing from the heart, any gesture becomes mechanical and wooden. Every position of the hand, arm, torso, etc., has a meaning; but indulged in without a sense of the dramatic value involved, they are less expressive than the man-brain directed movements of a marionette. In practicing the following attitudes, gestures, etc., con-

stantly seek a feeling of novelty, as though the movement were a reaction to something just imparted. Only when applied in this way will it become theatrically effective.

The modern and comparatively modern drama calls as a rule for much smaller movements of the hands and arms. The exquisitely perfect gesturing of Richard Mansfield, in which every turn of the hand expressed a thought, could not have been accomplished without great flexibility of the wrist directed by a brain alive to the most subtle nuances of meaning.

In order to insure equilibrium, there must be opposition in movement. Therefore, certain gestures which contribute this are used simultaneously with attitudes, i.e., the term applied to sustained positions of the body. A gesture is preceded by expression in the face; the gesture commences and terminates in an attitude of the hand, which is held until the idea is fully expressed or explained in speech, articulation having followed the beginning of the gesture.

The rapidity of the gesture is in proportion to the depth of emotion expressed; thus light and airy movements accompany comedy, while the slower and more weighty belong to tragedy.

The arm should never be stiffened while the gesture is being made; in illustrating explosive emotion it will become taut at the climax, complete prostration following as a reaction.

You will observe that when confirming a statement the arm with the rim of its hand facing downward is lowered in front of the body and the head inclined

forward. If you grow emphatic, the action becomes a quick repetition of up and down movements.

In making a positive declaration, your arm moves up, with the hand held rim downward. In denial or repulsion, it moves out from the body with the palm of the hand facing downward.

You accept with the palm held upward, the torso bending forward in opposition. A salutation will be delivered with a downward movement of the arm, the palm facing upward.

When emphatically refusing an object, also in refusing to hear or believe a statement made by another, the arm moves out at the side with the hand held palm out in opposition to the body. In drawing away from a repugnant object, the arm creeps in from the side accompanied by a shrinking away of the entire body.

In suspense, the arm seeks the body, with the palm usually turned downward.

When practicing gestures, you should arrange oppositions. The palm of the hand advances to the face, the back of the hand faces the back of the head, etc., etc.

The place of contact between hand and figure, either at the start or at the finish of a gesture, is largely determined by the zoning of the body, which has three main divisions. The head is the seat of reason; the breast, that of affection; the lower body houses vital force and passion. This explains why the heart is constantly sought by the hand in great emotional stress, while touching the brow indicates mental disturbance or profound thought. Placing the hand on the abdomen, usually means a pain in the "tummy," while

all gestures suggestive of an awakening of the brute instincts are made at a low level, the head and body displaying a tendency to crouch in direct contrast to the elevation of the entire figure, when the imagination is possessed of a lofty and spiritual idea.

In all gestures which start or finish with contacts such as the above, avoid an ugly spreading of the hand flat against the body.

Sensibility is expressed in the upper limbs, force, in the lower. Passion is shown in movements of shoulders and hips, while the elbows and knees suggest affection, and the wrists and ankles, natural impulses.

The top of the head is the seat of divine instinct, the brow is coldly intellectual, while the back of the head houses animal desires.

The body is shifted in a series of controlling movements known as transitions; these result in some particular form of motion such as a walk or run, or in an attitude which may be a bow, a kneeling or sitting posture, etc.

The transition for the walk is accomplished by standing with the feet placed obliquely, the poise on the forward foot. The free foot is swung forward so that it falls on a line in front of the body, the weight of which is carried forward and the arms allowed to swing. This action is repeated, first with the right foot, then with the left, ad lib. Opposition is provided by the swinging hands, the right advancing with the left foot and retreating as the right foot moves forward. Try to walk, swinging the right arm forward as you advance the right foot. You will at once be conscious

of the awkward effect produced by thwarting nature and her law of opposition.

In a run, the weight is kept on the balls of the feet; the elbows are held to the sides with the hands lifted.

To practice sitting down, locate a chair with a glance of the eye; cross to it without further attention. When one leg is either very near or in actual contact with the chair, gracefully pivot upon the foot, allowing the weight of the body to sink down gradually.

To rise, gently incline the body slightly forward and lift the weight on the foot nearer the chair. Apply one of the simple movements first practiced, that of stepping out with the free foot. (See Chapter VI.) Thus all awkwardness will be prevented.

A young actress should practice sitting down while wearing a trained, full or bustled skirt. This must be accomplished so that the material does not fall on the wrong side. For instance, in crossing from stage right to a seat down left, she must continue to a point six inches or a foot beyond the chair, then turn up stage and sit when her right leg touches. This will permit her train, the fullness of her skirt, or her bustle to fall on her left side. Not only will the stage picture be better, but she will not be incommoded on rising. Unless a hoop skirt, which must be tilted slightly up at the back, is worn, it will be unnecessary to touch the dress in the act of sitting.

A faint is accomplished by a mechanical movement of the feet, followed by a gradual or sudden sinking of the whole body. After taking several steps toward the right, hesitate when the right foot is in advance and

pivot the weight on the toes of both feet; withdraw all resistance from the rest of the body and collapse with the right leg under the left. If an actor is to catch a woman under the shoulders, the director will have placed him on a predetermined spot. In fainting on a divan, the pivot is made when the right leg touches its edge.

If a pretty maid is suddenly to seat herself on the lap of a surprised actor, her feet will go through the same mechanical movements. These, of course, must seem spontaneous to the audience. Most of us being right-handed, the action is usually performed with greater ease when taken from left to right.

A fall is made either toward the audience, obliquely or sideways. The right knee bends as the entire body (frequently with the right arm extended aloft) relaxes, and slips to the floor. In falling from a kneeling position, the body is thrown forward in collapsing, so that the right arm hits the floor first, thus protecting the head.

To bow, throw the weight to the advanced foot, at the same time lifting the body from the earth's gravity; relax, and at the same time shift the weight to the rear foot and bend forward at the waist. A man, bowing with old-fashioned courtesy, may hold a hat against his chest. Here we instantly have the opposition of body and arm in gesture. The deeper the bow, the greater the humility, respect, deference or inferiority denoted.

To kneel, take a long step forward with the up stage leg, throwing the weight upon it; lower the body until the

knee of the down stage leg touches the floor. Thus the body will remain in view of the audience, which would be impossible if the down stage leg were advanced. To rise, incline the body slightly forward and lift its weight on the up stage leg, bringing the other forward to a standing position. If on both knees, advance and raise the up stage leg until the foot presses the floor and continue lifting the body as just described. There can be a simultaneous action of both legs by first throwing the weight back on the feet and then lifting the body. This necessitates absolute surety of balance, however, and is not so graceful.

It is a well-established fact that, in action, the parts of the body according to the positions in which they are held will connote various feelings and thoughts, and also the condition of the body itself. By those born with dramatic ability, such positions or attitudes can, when called for, be assumed instinctively. Many good actors have never analyzed their method (if it can be termed such) of expressing certain emotions. The student may learn what constitutes the outward manifestation of sundry conditions of brain, heart and body, but if in attempting to simulate them the mechanical means become evident, then the whole action will be perfunctory and the effect disastrous.

With the divisions of the body and their significance well in mind, study conventional attitudes and strive to realize their emotional meaning.

When the body is held erect with the head resting easily between the shoulders, the arms hanging at the sides with the hands in normal position, the feet placed

in poise, and the facial expression calm, we at once receive the impression of a relaxed brain and a condition of repose.

When drawn toward another person by influence of an emotional nature, the trunk is moved in the direction of the object, the weight being carried to the forward foot; the arm is raised, and the slightly opened hand placed against the heart; the chin is thrust a bit forward and the raised eyeball is turned in the direction of the object. To draw the trunk away, shifting the weight to the back foot, lowering the eyeball from the object, and tightly closing the hand, will betray a feeling of antipathy or aversion. If, while retaining the same attitude of the trunk, the forearm is lifted and the palm of the hand turned toward the object, repulsion is denoted.

To contract the trunk inward with the weight on the heels, dropping the chin to the chest, and holding the arms against the sides with the fingers weakly curled inward, suggests the coward.

If the hand is held with the thumb lying relaxed in the palm, the head rolled to one side upon a relaxed neck, the upper eyelid concealing the iris and the body slumped down on the hips, complete physical prostration is shown.

If the weight is disposed on both feet and these placed apart, the trunk and head allowed to sink forward, and the eyelids to conceal one-half the iris, fatigue is apparent. This attitude of the feet is used to maintain equilibrium by drunken people whose eyelids are always noticeably droopy. Old people both

walk and stand with their feet well separated. An impression of vulgar indifference is created if, with the feet in the position described, the hands are placed on the hips, the head tilted to one side with the chin thrust forward, and the edge of the upper eyelid dropped halfway over the iris.

When the weight is carried on the middle of both feet, the hands held tightly closed, the chin thrust slightly forward, the neck muscles tightened and the eyebrows contracted, the result is controlled passion.

A servant or a soldier assuming an attitude of respectful attention will hold the body erect, the weight being carried on the heels, which are placed together. This attitude is accompanied by a face devoid of expression.

If the body is held with the weight on the front foot, excitation of some kind and degree is manifested. When the weight is thrown forward on the toes, the excitement indicated is of an impetuous character. The head is lifted, the chin thrust forward, while all the features become animated, the nostrils expand, the eyelids are raised so that the iris is uncovered, the jaw drops a little, and the lips part slightly. If to this is added complete abandon, the knee is bent, the head thrown back upon tightened neck muscles, eyelids held wide open and arms extended with the palms spread open.

If the excitement is of a milder form, such as that occasioned by listening, the weight rests on the heel of the forward foot, the arms are held in front of or behind the figure, or else folded across the chest with

the hands gently or firmly closed according to the intensity of the feeling aroused. The eyelid is raised to the top of the iris, disclosing a fixed expression in the eye, which is turned slightly to one side.

When the feelings must be expressed by a controlled body, the brunt of the burden is carried by the eyes, eyebrows, lips and hands.

In death, the telltale hand lies fully relaxed with its thumb falling across the palm. In all gestures of vital intensity, the thumb stands away from the other fingers. With them, it is held like a claw in moments of great exasperation. A curse is pronounced with the fingers curved and tense. In convulsive agony, the claw contracts with great effort. The grasping miser habitually maintains such an attitude in both hands.

The position of the eyelid varies with the degree of interest involved. In sleep, it is completely closed; nearly so, in fatigue. Madmen distend the eye, raising the lid until a line of white eyeball shows above the iris. Between these two extremes, the upper eyelid plays across the pupil, animation carrying it upward, and introspective thoughts lowering its edge until the pupil is almost covered.

The eyebrows (in their natural form) are capable, even to a greater extent than the eye, of expressing the attitude of mind of the character. To cover them with a hat destroys much of the actress' facial expression.

As a general rule, to contract and draw them downward at the inner corners indicates concentrated thought, while retaining this position and, at the same time, forming an arch with the outer ends, manifests extreme

anger. The action, if accompanied by a slight upward movement of the contracted inner corners, becomes expressive of terror.

To draw the inner corners upward and depress the outer ones creates a look of suffering, such as one beholds in Guido Reni's paintings of Christ on the Cross.

It is also possible by raising the inner corner to produce a look of discontent; this action, however, should always be accompanied by a closed mouth drawn down at the corners.

When the inner corners and the entire brow are held up in an unchanging arch, a look of stupidity will instantly settle on the face. To raise the brows as high as possible and at the same time open the eyes very wide will suggest an exalted state of mind and a play of imagination.

The lips, when raised at the corners, indicate a smile of pleasure; when, in addition, the mouth is opened, the smile becomes a laugh.

Slightly opened lips that droop at the corners, indicate sorrow or tears.

To open wide the mouth and let the jaw drop shows horror; if the lips are only parted a little way, surprise is indicated.

In firmness, the teeth come together and the lips close tightly.

An aggressive jaw, always rather suggestive of the bulldog, is thrust forward.

Drawn-in nostrils add a look of meanness and cruelty to the face; in excitement and passion. they are dilated.

CHAPTER VIII

VOCAL QUALITY

LIKE the body, the voice must be freed of constriction. When not the result of some organic defect, a faulty voice is often caused by a lack of muscular freedom in the chest, throat or mouth. Exercises for relaxing the jaw and neck are helpful.

To relax the jaw

Allow the mouth to fall open until a sense of weight is felt. Pushing the jaw with the fingers and shaking the head in added endeavor to move it is often conducive to headache and not advised.

To relax the neck

(NOTE. Use this exercise with discretion, being careful not to jerk the head.)

(*a*) Let the head hang backward. Then roll it to the right. To the left. Forward.

(*b*) By swaying the body, roll the head from shoulder to shoulder and across the chest. Make a complete circle.

These movements also relax the muscles of the upper trunk. A good stage voice can only come from a free open throat, accompanied by mental control of the mouth and lungs. Resonance or vocal poise is dependent on correct breathing, which is the foundation of vocal strength.

Breathing exercises

(*a*) Stand in poise with hands on hips.

(*b*) After completely exhaling, inhale slowly through partly closed lips, inflating the lungs by drawing up the diaphragm and holding the breath at nose and mouth. Exhale slowly.

(*c*) Repeat this until a diaphragmatic control of the breath is established with complete freedom in the air passages of the throat.

(*d*) Gradually add various sounds to the above such as hissing and groaning. Repeat the vowels in an explosive manner. Combine the vowels with consonants.

A voice persistently high-pitched indicates either that something is organically wrong, demanding a physician's care, or that the brain is not being sufficiently exercised.

The need for proper articulation cannot be too greatly stressed. This is accomplished by mental control of the mouth and lips.

To acquire better articulation

(*a*) Read slowly, always pronouncing the final syllables.

(*b*) Never slur the syllables.

(*c*) Never drop the voice toward the end of a sentence.

(*d*) Have a clean-cut ending to words, never adding a vowel sound.

Projection of the voice is a trick of which the actor must be master. The tones must come from the forward part of the mouth behind the teeth, accompanied by flexibility of the lip muscles. This gives clarity

without loudness and will carry the voice to those in the rear of the balcony.

Exercises in projection

1. Combine consonants such as *s* and *b* with vowels and repeat them rapidly, throwing the tone forward. The mouth is open in the formation of the vowel sounds, whose variations depend mainly on the position of the lips and the tongue.
2. Read paragraphs, keeping the tone forward in the mouth. Do not compress the throat. A voice choked with emotion becomes inarticulate unless the brain directs each word.

Inflection, which results in a melodious flow of vocal sound, is inseparable from good reading. Without it, the voice would be monotonous.

Exercises in inflection

(*a*) On a vowel sound intone one note of the musical scale repeatedly.

(*b*) Combine this vowel with a consonant, and intone two notes of the scale, one for the vowel and the other for the consonant.

(*c*) Combine various vowels with consonants on several notes of the scale, sliding up and down.

To correct nasal tones

Reading slowly, separate all nasal tones such as *m*, *n* and *ng* from the mouth tones. Repeat, gradually increasing the rapidity until the words are spoken correctly.

The defect of lisping consists in pronouncing the *s* sound like *th*. The *s* sound is represented not only by the letter *s*, but frequently by the letter *c*, as in *Cæsar*,

ace; sometimes by *s* and *c* combined as in *ascend.* In *accent,* the first *c* has the *k* sound, the second, the *s* sound, which latter being lisped gives *akthent.*

To correct a lisp

1. Practice pronouncing the letter *s.* The tip of the tongue should almost touch the upper teeth.
2. Pronounce *th.* The tip of the tongue should touch the upper teeth.
3. Repeat sentences containing words in which the letter *s* figures. Slowly at first, then increasing the speed, while always controlling the tip of the tongue.

Interrupting the flow of speech by holding a sound is called stammering, while stuttering consists in repeating a consonant rapidly several times before being able to pronounce the next syllable or word.

For stage work, all traces of both these impediments will be removed by a relaxed brain having under its control flexible lips and an obedient tongue.

For enlarged tonsils, catarrh and the like, the advice and care of a physician should be sought.

One of the most difficult tricks for a novice is laughing. When indulged in by beginners, the peals of ha, ha, as taught by elocution teachers are usually the emptiest of all empty things. In real life, laughs are as varied as faces. If pupils were taught to develop their own especial style with sufficient volume for the peal, gurgle, or giggle to reach the audience, and if they were taught, besides, to give forth a real spirit of mirth, then the strained, false note would not so often break the illusion.

6315

Vocal expression is largely instinctive. All the foregoing exercises (and quantities of others exist) will train the voice, but no one can read the lines of a part successfully without both guiding intelligence and artistic perception.

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CHAPTER IX

THINGS AN UNTRAINED BEGINNER SHOULD KNOW

LET us suppose that you, an untrained beginner, have successfully approached the powers that be and obtained an engagement. Weeks of rehearsals follow, periods trying enough for experienced players. The director and most of the company know you to be an amateur who has secured his chance through influential friends, and, if these rank high in the theatrical or financial world, will be gracious. Otherwise, some will remain aloof (such is the jealousy of the "profession") with mutterings about taking the bread out of the mouths of real actors, a few will be friendly and encouraging, and the old character people will be prone to give advice.

George Bernard Shaw says: "I always tell people that if they can't do three-quarters of any art by nature they'd better sweep a crossing." Guided solely by instinct, the talented boy or girl will do many things correctly; some of the less gifted require merely an eye-opener.

A busy director, struggling with the problems of a new play, has no time to teach acting even if he could. Therefore, you will advance with greater rapidity, if you can get about a stage without breaking all the

"Thou Shalt Nots" of the theatre. The stage has certain fundamental laws.

During a rehearsal, a well-bred young man will not occupy the only available chair when an actress or an older man leaves the stage proper. Neither will a young woman remain seated if a more important actress in the cast is standing. Actors, as a rule, either have innate good manners or else affect them, and will quickly secure another chair from the property man. Deference will do much to advance you in the favor of the company, whose members are ever on the *qui vive* to resent anything like "airs" on the part of a beginner. Your place, when not active on the scene itself, is in the wings, *never down on the stage apron,* a section below the curtain line reserved exclusively for managers, directors, stars or authors. (See Diagram 1.)

There will be no scenery in place, only a vast, empty space, with chairs marking exits, the boundaries of the set, etc. These an actor must never be guilty of either displacing or sitting down on.

"Quiet in the wings" is obligatory at a performance; it follows, as a matter of course, that disturbing chatter must not be indulged in at rehearsals, either.

When working in a scene, never leave the stage proper during an interruption. If the director is occupied with some one else, remain in your place, keeping in the part. It is bad form to look bored, while whispering or carrying on a conversation is not permitted. Guying, or joking with the other actors bespeaks the amateur. The least a beginner can do is to give in-

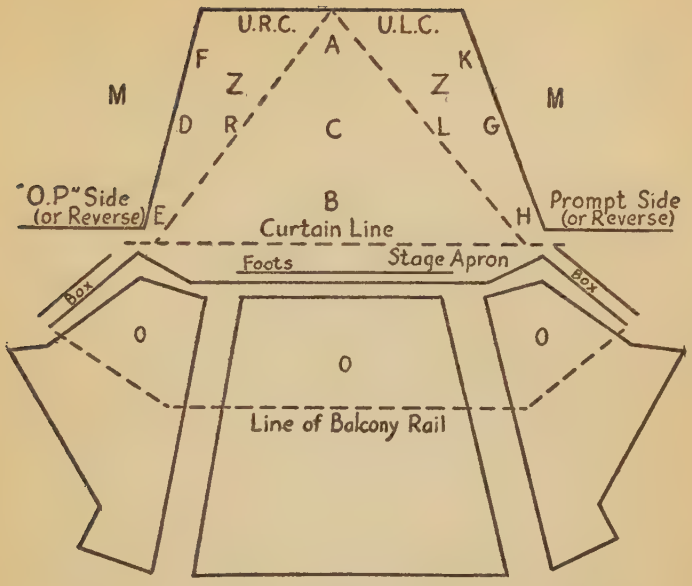

Diagram 1

DIAGRAM OF A POPULAR STYLE OF MODERN THEATRE

The letters are used to mark the positions on the diagram; they are not the usual abbreviations. (For these, see Chapter III.) A, up stage. B, down stage. C, stage center. R, right. L, left. M, back stage. D, right. E, Down right. F, up right. K, up left. G, left. H, down left. Z, the least-seen sections of the stage. The triangle, a–h–e, contains the most desirable portion of the stage. U.R.C., upper right center; U.L.C., upper left center. O, orchestra. Everything on this side of the footlights is "the front of the house."

telligent attention to all the director is saying. In this way much may be learned. At the same time, you must appear to be attending strictly to your own business and never break in with remarks or suggestions intended to be helpful, when the director is showing another member of the company what he wants done.

Don't cover any one on the scene. For instance, if a character is standing up stage, either at the right or

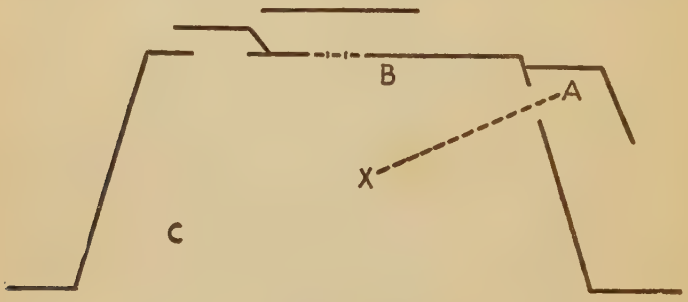

DIAGRAM 2

"COVERING" ANOTHER ACTOR ON THE SCENE

B is standing up stage at window. C is down stage right. A enters from upper left entrance and comes to a stop at X directly in front of B. This "covers" or blocks the view of B.

the left, and you make an entrance, avoid coming to a stop directly in front of him, for, if the view of a player is more or less blocked, the picture the audience sees becomes blurred. The same rule applies to any part of the stage, also, in making a cross. If there are many people on the scene, it will be confusing at first, but this fundamental law should be borne in mind and practiced until it becomes second nature. Occasionally, in order to ease the situation, a player, who

would be unavoidably covered by your entrance, is instructed by the director to walk several feet in the opposite direction, the mechanism of the move, however, being skillfully concealed. The business of keeping the picture thus balanced and unspoiled is called "dressing the stage." (See Diagrams 2, 3 and 4.)

Never step below the curtain line, which is the "fourth wall." (See Diagram 5.)

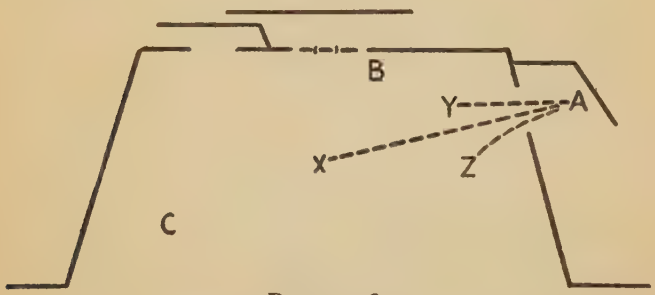

DIAGRAM 3

KEEPING THE PICTURE UNSPOILED

The same characters as in Diagram 2. If an important character, A, on entering, could have crossed to X; if a servant or inferior character he could have stopped at Y or Z.

Don't look down on the floor when making an entrance, unless you wish to appear shamefaced.

When the business of the play calls for sitting down, locate the designated chair or sofa with one glance, then walk toward it while continuing the conversation or business of the moment. Never stare at the seat as you approach.

Rest easily against the chair back and avoid gazing down into the footlights—an amateurish habit. If

chatting in a room at home, you would not minutely scrutinize the surbase.

When conversing with another actor, don't stand below him, i.e., nearer the footlights. Such a position forces you to turn up stage and makes him your superior; in short, gives him "the stage." Place yourself, as nearly as possible, on the same line; the result will be a fair give and take. To "steal the scene" by deliberately stepping a foot farther up stage, thereby

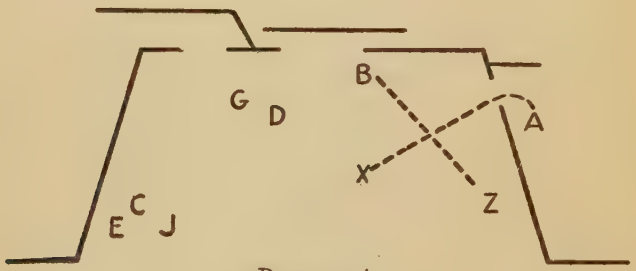

DIAGRAM 4

"DRESSING THE STAGE"

B, G, D, E, C and J are characters in the scene. If, on the entrance of A, who stops at X, B moves down to Z, the stage will be "dressed."

making your partner turn his back on the audience in order to face you, is a trick as old as the theatre itself. Needless to say, it should not be stooped to by players of to-day.

If compelled to speak while facing up stage, the voice will be projected away from the auditorium and, unless you remember to use more volume, will trail off into the scenery or the rigging loft.

You should realize that in the modern theatre you

speak naturally, without shouting; nevertheless, project the voice so that every word uttered can be heard by a spectator in the balcony.

Never pitch your voice below that of the actor who is playing the scene with you. If his speech is always higher and your reply several tones lower, the audience is sure to be annoyed, and, in consequence, the scene made to suffer.

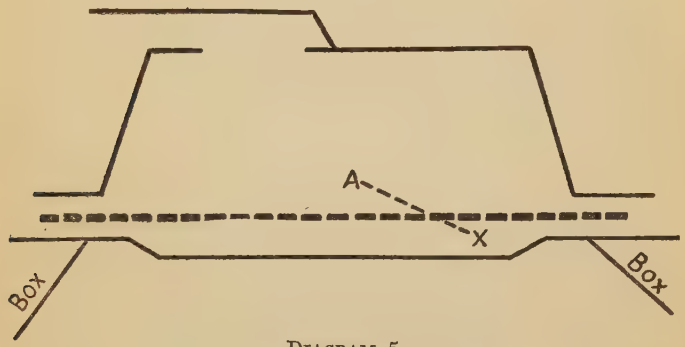

DIAGRAM 5

THE "FOURTH WALL"

D. The broken line indicates curtain line which represents the "fourth wall" of the room. If A comes down stage as far as X, he steps over the curtain line and out of the scene.

Don't stand so close that no space is left for gestures. In extending the hand for a shake, leave plenty of room for the other performer to make it fifty-fifty. Most stages provide ample floor space, so that, even when a number of people are on, it is never necessary to crowd another player unless the business demands it.

When waiting for an entrance cue, be very careful to place yourself not only out of sight, but also where

no spotlight behind will make your shadow visible to the audience, by casting it ahead of you on the entrance backing (the name for a small piece of scenery placed on the off stage side of a door or window). This is an instance where coming events positively must not cast their shadows before. (See Diagram 6.)

If the entrance involves opening a door, always start sooner than you would otherwise. Never cause a stage wait by being late.

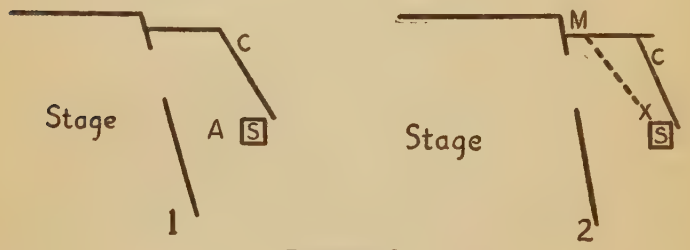

DIAGRAM 6

AWAITING THE ENTRANCE CUE

1. A represents a character standing in the proper place waiting for his entrance cue. C—a piece of backing. S—spotlight.

2. If A stands at X, the light S will cast his flickering shadow at M, a spot on the backing, where it will be noticed by the audience.

As a rule, unless the relations are intimate family ones, look people in the eye when talking to them. This should be especially observed in giving an important speech just before leaving the stage.

When about to make an exit, rest the weight on the leg away from the door, so that you can step out with the foot on the off stage side. This prevents awkwardness and greatly simplifies the action. The same rule

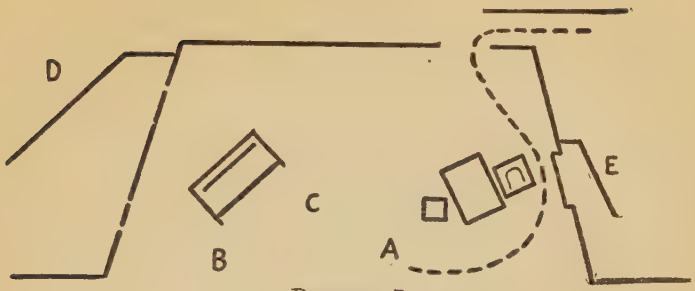

DIAGRAM 7

A BAD EXIT

A is talking to B and C and turns to exit up left, making a detour around the furniture. D is a piece of exterior backing showing the view from the two windows. E is a fireplace backing which prevents the audience from seeing back stage.

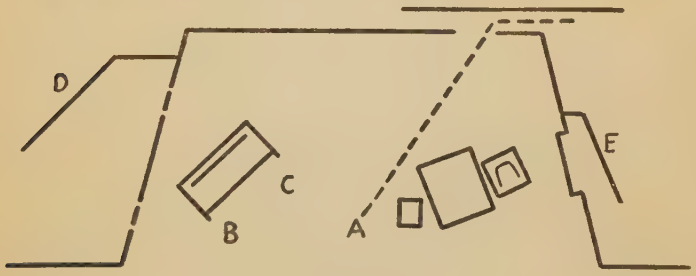

DIAGRAM 8

A GOOD EXIT

In this, A is taking the nearer and more natural way.

applies to a stage cross. If the exit is well up stage and behind you, turn the most natural way, which will also be the most direct one. Avoid a detour around a lot of furniture. (See Diagrams 7 and 8.)

Never drop out of character until at least five feet beyond the exit. There must be no slump of the figure so long as you can be seen from the auditorium. If

carrying on a conversation, sustain a continued murmur until well out of sight. This should be gradually increased in volume to prevent deadening by the scenery, and then allowed slowly to die away. When lines are not provided, the actors are directed to ad lib, i.e., make up appropriate conversation. A laugh or a burst of sobbing must be built up in a crescendo so as to be still

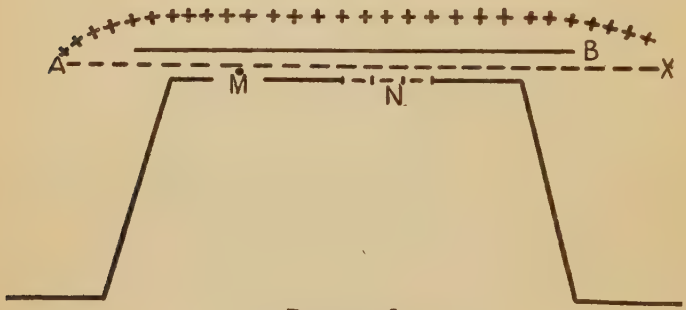

DIAGRAM 9

CROSSING BACK STAGE

M and N represent a door and window. B is the back drop. A, by taking the dotted line to X instead of the crossed line, is seen by the audience passing between the backing and the door and window.

audible to those out in front when the character has retreated ten or more feet off stage.

Be careful in crossing back stage during a performance. Do not, by passing between an open window or door and the backing, inadvertently step into full view of the audience. (See Diagram 9.)

If it is your business to take part in a "call," don't dart on the stage until you are sure the curtain is down,

and don't remove your costume or your make-up until it is over.

For performances, be in the theatre before "half-hour" is called. This will insure proper time for putting on a straight make-up and your costume, which is the usual order of procedure. Many professionals take an hour, especially those having a complicated character make-up to tackle. There are others who dress in a leisurely way, many who become nervous if hurried, and a great host who would rather be back stage than anywhere else in the world.

At the call of "Places, first act," or "Everybody down for the first act," if you are "on" at the beginning or to enter shortly after, go at once to your position.

Before the curtain is raised, the stage manager will call "Clear." This means that if you are loitering on the set and are not to be "discovered" (an expression dear to the old dramatists) at the rise of the curtain, you must instantly leave.

See that your "props" (properties) are ready wherever needed.

"Stand by" in the entrance, well in advance of your cue and get into character. Remember you are a professional, working for pay, and there must be no delays.

On arrival at the theatre before a performance, take the key of your dressing room from the rack near the stage door. (Before the dress rehearsal or the first performance, you will have ascertained the number or letter of the room from a list placed on the call board by the stage manager.) *The key of a dressing room is*

never taken out of the theatre. Before leaving, replace it on its hook.

Possessed of intelligence, a beginner, trained or untrained, may learn much from watching experienced actors at a rehearsal. Later on, the serious-minded often post themselves in the wings at performances. They should be wary, however, of copying the theatrical tricks exhibited by some actors who gracefully and insincerely present the outside shell of a character. A careful observer out in front can tell by an actor's eye, whether he is feeling the part or merely walking through it.

CHAPTER X

MAKE-UP

AFTER an engagement is secured by an untrained beginner and a safe journey made at the first rehearsals past the pitfalls lying in wait for the unwary amateur, the question of make-up and costuming arises.

As to the former, advice and help will be offered with the best of intentions by members of the company, who all have pet colors, powders and creams and can out-talk any traveling salesman when trying to boost them. However, make-up is a matter for personal consideration and the particular blue that gives the ingenue's eyes such a childish appeal will be all wrong on hazel or brown ones. Many an inexperienced girl, suddenly securing through good luck or influence a chance to appear in a part, is "made-up" by a dressing room mate, all of whose fads as to colors, brands of materials, etc., she will adopt for her own use, with the result that sooner or later she learns from director or management that her appearance does not come up to what was expected. Frequently, the very obvious fault in the make-up thus adversely criticized is due to indulging in a new paint or to copying a trick of application which has proved very telling on some other player's face.

Once a beautiful Follies girl told me that, not wanting to confess her total ignorance of the subject, she had, at her first dress rehearsals and performances, elected to pose as an experienced professional and had bluffed her knowledge of make-up by surreptitiously copying the varying methods used by girls about her in the dressing room. She had not the faintest idea either of the reason for each step nor of what the resulting effect would be. Her make-up became a bizarre mingling of blonde foundation, brunette powder, Nordic eyes and Spanish lips, crowned by her own glorious red hair. Her beauty was of so refulgent a type, however, that she passed muster with managers and public. One day a professional who had watched the show came back stage in great distress, exclaiming: "You are so soft and lovely in both coloring and features but on the stage you look so hard." Being intelligent and also ambitious, the girl decided it was time to start a serious study of the technique of dramatic art. Eventually she achieved a position of distinction.

It is usually the lot of a beginner, who is presumably young, to be cast for a part calling for a juvenile or what is commonly termed a "straight" make-up, the object of which is to replace the color taken out of the face by stage lighting and, at the same time, enhance the user's looks to the uttermost possible. The latter reason cannot be ascribed purely to vanity, for competition in the theatre is strong. No aspirant, boy or girl, can afford to neglect anything that will prove conducive to beauty.

Let no beginner think that, by laying in a supply of materials and reading over and following the directions in this chapter once or twice, he or she, when Lady Luck leads to a dress rehearsal, will be competent to put on a good make-up. Considering that the first time a straight make-up is tried, some two hours will be needed by the beginner, and that an experienced professional is capable of doing the same work in several minutes, it will be plainly seen that much practice will be necessary. The various steps must be performed slowly and carefully at first, in order to make the application technically perfect. As the hand becomes more dexterous and the eye surer of the effect desired, the speed can be gradually increased. Students should emulate the adept professional who is obliged to put on a make-up eight times a week. Every night before retiring let them work with paints, practicing until they master the blending of rouge and grease paint and can produce two enlarged eyes that are mates.

Materials for a Straight Make-up

Theatrical cold cream, 1-pound tin

Grease paints for men

Several makes are mentioned in case a preference exists, but only one of the juvenile sticks need be bought. For medium coloring select one of the following:

Miner's No. 4	Bernner's No. 3
Stein's No. 4	Leichner's No. 3½

Factor's No. 2A

For extremely blond types, use one of the above sparingly. A very dark man of the Spanish type, for

example, will look better if he will avoid pink or red foundations and use those which carry out his own coloring—a light olive stick in any make, or a mixture of a small quantity of paint from one of the above-mentioned juvenile sticks with some moving-picture yellow which is No. 5 in Bernner's, Leichner's and Factor's, No. 27 in Stein's and No. 28 in Miner's paints. Any man whose beard grows rapidly, making it impossible to hide the dark jaws with the ordinary foundation, should mix a very light juvenile shade, such as No. 2 in any make, with his regular foundation grease paint and apply this mixture directly over the lower part of his face. If the lights are white or pale amber, heavier shades of grease paint should be used. A stick of No. 1 will also be needed if any high lighting of the features is needed.

Grease paints for women

Those of medium coloring can select a stick from the following:

Miner's No. 2 Factor's No. 1½
Bernner's No. 1½ Leichner's No. 1½
Stein's No. 1 and No. 3 mixed

A very white skin looks better with No. 2 (if the paint is of a pinkish shade) or even with No. 2½, which is still deeper. A brunette will find a creamy shade of foundation more becoming; Stein's No. 2 and Factor's No. 4 are of this variety.

A stick of No. 1 is also useful.

Paint cloths

These may be of various materials such as cheesecloth, old linen, old crêpe de Chine, etc. Avoid inflaming a delicate skin by rubbing with coarse material. Paper tissue is better adapted for the removal of cold cream.

Liners

Medium Blue. For blond or medium colored hair with blue eyes.

Purple (used by women only; men should substitute Dark Brown). For velvety brown eyes and dark hair.

Dark Brown. For men of the above coloring, also for men and women with brown eyes in combination with red or blond hair.

Medium Green. Not advisable when the lighting is deep amber, in which case Dark Brown should be substituted. For hazel eyes, also green eyes in combination with blond or red hair.

Dark Blue. For dark blue or gray eyes with black or brown hair.

Jar of wet rouge of a medium shade

Powder for men

Any one of the following may be selected:

Bernner's No. 5	Stein's No. 8
Miner's No. 5	Factor's No. 3

The actor using an olive foundation is cautioned to use a powder of the same make, otherwise there is danger of the paint turning dark. When a mixed brunette foundation is used, avoid a pinkish powder.

Powder for women

Blondes and those of medium coloring may select any one of the following:

Bernner's No. 2	Factor's No. 2
Stein's No. 2	Miner's No. 2

Brunettes should use any one of

Bernner's No. 4	Miner's No. 4
Stein's No. 4	Factor's No. 6

Factor's No. 7R

Lamb's wool puff measuring about four inches in diameter.

Baby brush
The white bristles should not be harsh.

Black pencil
This resembles a lead pencil but contains hardened grease paint and is equipped with a metal cap to protect the point which should be kept clean of all paint and powder. Wipe with a rag and occasionally sharpen. They are made by Faber, Leichner, Factor, etc., and are procurable wherever make-up is sold.

A package of paper stumps

Box of Dorin's Rouge de Théâtre, No. 18

Hare's foot

Women will also need:
Black Cosmetic for all types having black or brown hair
Brown Cosmetic for blondes and red-haired girls
A cosmetic stove (and matches)
Liquid whitening of a blonde or brunette shade may be added if the arms and neck require touching up.

A Straight Make-up for Men

1. Rub cold cream over the face, neck and ears. Actors employ both hands and work vigorously.

2. With the cloth, wipe the cold-creamed surface until the face ceases to look greasy. The pores should still retain cream.

3. With the stick of juvenile grease paint, draw lines across the forehead directly above the eyebrows. Do not place paint near the hair. Several lines should run down each cheek, the nose, upper lip, chin and

about the neck. Working with a rotary motion, rub the paint together until an even blend results. There must be no streaks, no unpainted flesh visible about the eyes and nose and the paint on the neck must extend well below the collar edge. With the thumbs and forefingers rub grease paint through the ears. Work the paint on the forehead so that it fades out as the hairline is approached.

4. With the forefinger apply wet rouge across the cheek bones. Clean the finger and blend the rouge into the surrounding foundation until it fades off in all directions. No rouge must show directly in front of the ear. Only use enough color to replace that taken out of the face by the lights. A palpably rouged actor is ludicrous to the audience. If footlights are used place a delicate shading of wet rouge directly beneath the eyebrows and the chin in order to create shadow.

5. Part the lips slightly and, while keeping them relaxed, apply wet rouge with the tip of the forefinger. Follow the shape of the upper and lower lips, fading the color near the corners unless the mouth happens to be an extremely small one. If the lower lip is large, dwarfing the upper, before painting, run the stick of foundation paint along its edge, cutting off a sixteenth or an eighth of an inch of red lip. Be sparing of color, for the mouth of an actor must not appear lip-sticked.

6. Strong overhead lighting often causes deep-set eyes to disappear in shadow. This may be remedied by mixing some No. 1 grease paint with the foundation and applying it to the space between eyes and eyebrows.

7. A line of No. 1 grease paint, which is commonly

known as high light, drawn from the bridge to the tip of the nose will increase its prominence. A chin is also strengthened by placing a horizontal line of this same paint across its tip, then gently patting the edges until they blend with the foundation.

8. Men do not use much eye make-up. Shading on the eyelid is confined to either blue or brown paint. Selecting the liner best suited to your individual needs, draw it across the upper eyelids a couple of times; then with the finger tips pat and push the paint until a soft shading is formed running just above the roots of the lashes.

9. Place the puff, well laden with powder, against the face and press it firmly into the grease paint. Repeat this until every bit of the foundation is covered with powder well packed down.

10. Take the baby brush and starting high on the forehead brush downward with long, hard strokes. This removes all superfluous powder.

11. With the black pencil (use a brown one if you have fair hair, eyes and skin) draw a line along the edge of the upper eyelid; when the outer corner of the eye is reached, slant downward an eighth of an inch, then curve and run straight out toward the temple, stopping when at a distance of one-half inch from the outer corner of the eye. Under the eye draw a straight, soft, shadowy line extending an eighth of an inch beyond the point at which your eyelid edge begins to curve upward. Arrived here, curve your line and continue up until it joins the one running out from the corner of the eye midway of its length. The small piece of

skin enclosed between the lines will resemble a portion of eyeball and enlarge the eye.

12. Men should always moisten the lashes to remove any powder which may be clinging to them. This is important. Grease paint or cosmetic should never be used by men but, if the part is of a very dashing type, a light wash of black mascaro may be given the upper lashes.

13. Place a dot of lip rouge at the inner corners of the eyes. If, however, your eyes are set rather close to the nose, it is better to omit this touch.

14. Comb the eyebrows into a good line and, if necessary, touch them up with the black pencil. Avoid a startling, black effect. They should tone in with the color of the hair and eyes.

15. If a sufficient amount of foundation and wet rouge has been applied, it will be unnecessary for an actor to add dry rouge on a hare's foot.

16. To remove, rub plenty of cold cream through the paint. When loosened, wipe off with a cloth. A light astringent lotion will remedy any greasy look.

A Juvenile or Straight Make-up for Girls

1. Rub cold cream all over the face and halfway down the throat. When the pores are filled, wipe the face with a cloth until it no longer shines.

2. With a stick of juvenile grease paint, draw lines of paint across the forehead, down the nose, across the chin and about the cheeks. Carry a few lines down over the jawbone onto the throat. Do not overlap the

lines and be economical with the paint, else your face will resemble a stuccoed wall. With the fingers of both hands, blend the paint together until a smooth, even color covers *the entire face.*

3. Dip the finger in the pot of wet rouge and run a crescent of paint across each cheek bone. Never place the rouge low on the cheek; this tends to drag the face

DIAGRAM 10

ALTERING THE SHAPE OF THE MOUTH

If it is desirable to create a dip in the center of the upper lip in order to eliminate a pouty expression, first block out the natural color by applying foundation grease paint; then place the rouge no higher than suggested by the dotted line. This will bring out the effect of a Cupid's bow. To reduce the size of a protruding lower lip, cut off the lower edge by covering it with grease paint along the entire length before coloring the remainder with wet rouge.

down and suggests age. If your face is broad, keep most of the color under the eye for a narrowing effect. After wiping the fingers, pat and push the rouge until it fades in all directions. There must be no harsh edges. In blending, never allow the rouge to extend back to the ear, and always let it fade out gradually under the eye until it reaches the eyelid. Light foundation left under the eye tends to create a pouchy formation. If there are footlights, run some wet rouge under each

eyebrow but be careful to keep the eyelid free of any red.

4. While holding the lips slightly parted, paint them with wet rouge, working either with the forefinger, the rounded end of an orange stick, a paint brush or a paper stump. Don't use your street lipstick. The upper lip when finished should present two perfect curves separated by a decided dip at its center. The lower should be wide through the middle, curving up from there toward the corners. Fade the rouge off before these points are reached unless your mouth is too small for your face.

5. If the nose tilts, the inside of the nostrils should be touched up with wet rouge applied on a paper stump. Care must be exercised not to blur any red paint on the surrounding white skin.

6. From the list of materials select the liner suggested for your coloring and with it make dots and dashes of paint across your eyelids just above the roots of the lashes. With the finger, blur this paint until a soft, even shading without spots appears. At the outer corner of the eye, extend this shading for about one-half inch. About its edges this coloring must fade into the foundation just as all rouge should. A perfect blending of colors is the secret of a good make-up. By apparently lengthening the upper eyelid we are beginning to suggest a larger eye. When making up the upper eyelids, a good trick is to hold a hand mirror on a level with the chest, raise the brows and look down at your reflection. This, besides enabling you to see the progress of the work, prevents the paint from

smudging through closed lashes onto the cheek below and from running in streaks at the upper eyelid fold.

7. With a puff full of juvenile powder, press down on the grease paint. Do not rub. Repeat until the entire face is covered. Do not neglect the space between eyebrows and lashes.

8. Dust off the superfluous powder with the baby brush. Do not be afraid to press firmly for, if you have packed the powder down as directed, your paint will be set.

9. Place the point of your black pencil (brown, if you are very blonde) exactly where the upper and lower eyelids join at the outer corner of the eye. Draw a fine line slanting downward for one-eighth of an inch; turn, and run straight out, allowing it to fade and disappear completely at a distance of one-half inch from its starting point. This simulated eyelash creates the illusion of a longer eyelid. Very little paint can be placed below the eye without becoming perceptible. Look straight before you into a hand mirror. With the pencil, draw a very light, straight line under the eye, starting it midway between the inner corner and the iris, and continuing until a point one-eighth of an inch beyond where your own eyelid starts to curve up is reached. At this spot slant up until you strike the middle of the line which extends out from the corner of the eye. The section of skin enclosed between these lines takes on the appearance of eyeball and serves to enlarge the eye.

10. Only the upper lashes are darkened with paint.

This is termed loading, not beading. Break a piece of cosmetic, black or brown, whichever is suggested as best suited for your type, and place it in the little pan which comes with your cosmetic stove. Light the candle and, when the paint melts, take some up either on a thick wire hairpin bent straight, or on the tip of a paper stump, orange stick or brush and darken the under side of the upper lashes, being careful not to clot them.

11. On the skin at the inner corner of the eye place a dot of wet rouge.

12. Comb the eyebrows into matching lines. Unless very heavy, draw a line of black (brown, if you are very fair) through their tops and extending at the outer end a little beyond their actual length, in order to balance the enlarged eye beneath.

13. Should the complexion need brightening, apply a little dry rouge with the hare's foot. Carefully blend all edges by rubbing with the end which is free of paint. Should a handle be affixed, unscrew, and remove it. Remember, you only need enough color to replace that taken away by the lights. The clearer the lighting, the more perfect should be the blending. With foot-lights, place a little rouge under the chin with your hare's foot. Paint the lobes and the rims of your ears with dry rouge.

14. If a shiny appearance has developed, a light sifting of powder can be added to the whole make-up. This can be accomplished easily with a swan's-down puff (not included in the list as absolutely necessary). However, if the first application has been packed on

heavily no retouching will be needed until the first act is over.

15. When liquid whitening is required for the arms and neck, shake the bottle well and apply evenly with a wet sponge.

16. To clean up, place cold cream on each cheek and rub it everywhere except about the eyes. Wipe the face clean with the cloth. Take cold cream between thumb and finger and gently roll the lashes. When the paint is loosened, hold the lashes in a cloth and carefully pull the paint off. Never rub cold cream into the eye.

The attention of the young man or woman who is better suited to character parts, the boy or girl anticipating a career in the movies, as well as all those who when playing in stock may need advice in making up for various nationalities, is directed to the author's book entitled, *The Art of Make-up,* which deals with the entire subject in greater detail than can be presented in this chapter.

CHAPTER XI

COSTUME

THE young player may obtain an engagement in a production for which the management provides the costumes. These are either executed by a theatrical costumer from designs made by an artist or are ordered from the dressmaker or store best suited to supply the sort of clothes demanded by the play. Well-known Fifth Avenue modistes and tailors would be selected to outfit a cast which is to represent the upper crust of society but, for a play dealing with its dregs, the actors would be garbed in clothes furnished by emporiums on the lower East Side of New York.

In many companies, however, the professional provides the costume, which, besides conforming to requirements voiced by director and author, must be of a suitable and harmonizing color and of a cut favoring as much as possible the player's physique.

It is advisable to assemble a wardrobe before signing up for a stock engagement. The manager will expect the actor to have a full dress suit, a Tuxedo, and a cutaway coat, besides other clothes suitable for business or sport wear. An overcoat and raincoat, together with an array of correct accessories in the way of hats, neckties, collars, shoes, etc., will save the busy stock actor much worry.

The lot of a stock actress is infinitely harder as far as costuming is concerned. The feminine portion of her fans will instantly recognize a gown which has done duty for Paula Tanqueray if it appears a few weeks later on the shoulders of Celia Faraday. Therefore, camouflage in the way of dyes, altered trimming, etc., is constantly needed. It is better to start the evening gown in a pale shade which, if dyeing is resorted to, will admit of a gradual deepening or changing of the color. Chiffon, net and tulle dresses can be varied through the use of different colored slips. A handsome black lace or velvet afternoon gown, that can be made suitable for evening by detaching the sleeves and the chiffon or lace filling in the neck and back, will be useful when the type of part and play permits of its use. Ethel Barrymore wore a black evening dress in the last act of "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray." Blanche Bates appeared in one of black lace as Mrs. Fair and its author asks Celia Faraday to wear black in an evening scene in "Green Stockings." From these few instances, selected from the many that might be quoted, it will be readily seen that a leading woman in stock would find a costume of this sort very useful.

Many parts call for a showy evening wrap which, while theatrically effective, need not be as expensive as it appears. A reversible one, with interchangeable fur collars, would be serviceable and not liable to detection. Negligees can be dipped and rearranged.

The present fad for femininity, in which flounces, drapes, hanging bows, lace, etc., figure so largely, make

the alterations of afternoon gowns less difficult. It is well to have several in the wardrobe, also a good-looking sport ensemble in tweed and a tennis frock of tailored silk. If the latter has a coat, it will provide a dressier type of sport costume.

Slippers can be dyed or re-covered, but the actress should be supplied with at least three pairs of becoming low shoes—black, beige and sport. Very tall girls are helped by Baby Louis heels but should never affect low flat ones in an attempt to lessen their height, for the feet will be rendered very ugly by contrast with those of other women in the scene.

The fashion in the cut of a hat brim or the shape of a hand bag changes so frequently that it is inadvisable to lay in a supply. Dealers will be only too glad to ship the latest styles upon request.

The ingenue should see that her clothes are above all else girlish and, as a rule, light in color, while the character woman will need dresses of quieter hue and a more elderly cut, unless playing in a modern society drama in which the mother's clothes are modeled on those of her daughter. She will find a plain gray dress with a long, moderately full skirt, a high neckline and long sleeves very useful for middle-aged maids, housekeepers, old-fashioned mothers, and the like. A supply of variously colored large aprons, also lawn ties, neck handkerchiefs, hats, bonnets and caps for wear in conjunction with this dress makes it invaluable for stock.

Certain dealers in New York City make a business

of buying up expensive dresses that have been worn by prominent actresses in Broadway productions. These, rented or bought outright, enable the young actress to assemble a good stock wardrobe at a considerable reduction from their original cost. They are far from being old style. Remember, famous houses consider it good business to allow a popular actress to display some absolutely original ideas in costume, knowing well that the women in the audience will want copies made

The young player should have a good-looking street wardrobe which, under no circumstances, must she confuse with her stage clothes. Not only is this considered in bad taste by the profession, but it is also a sure sign that she is in financial straits.

Local dressmakers and seamstresses work in conjunction with stock companies but the actress should be competent to direct exactly what she wishes done in order to create a certain effect.

Clothes for the so-called "costume" plays are hired in advance from theatrical costumers in New York, Chicago and other not too distant cities. These are altered to measurement and shipped. It is advisable that the player should know something of "period" clothes and the various ways of handling certain fashions. In the author's book, *Clothes: On and Off the Stage,* the history of period costuming is given in continuity and details such as the arrangement of drapes, the handling of a toga, correct headdresses and hair dressing for all periods, etc., etc., have been gone into very thoroughly. The beginner's attention is called to

it, for many points on color, lines in costume, etc., which cannot be discussed here.

If you are to provide clothes for a production, first find out what is desired by the director and what colors the other performers intend wearing. Then, when selecting, have the material or costume shown in electric light and, if possible, with an amber bulb in the socket. Remember the color will never look as it does by day and will be greatly changed by yellow light. If you are to appear in a comedy, avoid dark, depressing colors unless you have been instructed to wear them for an especial reason. On the other hand, if your business is to make the audience weep, select quiet shades.

Endeavor to find costumes which will not tend to increase either your height or your girth undesirably. No one wants to appear too tall on the stage and it is the ingenue's business to look short. In such cases, avoid lines in trimming or panels of color which are set vertically, as they emphasize height. The lengthened skirts make all women look taller. Of course, if the lack of an inch or so is standing between you and a leading part, do all you can to capture it by using long lines and high heels. You may not add a cubit to your stature but it will be helped. The opposite is true of horizontal lines, which, besides shortening, broaden the figure. Be careful not to have a large bow or a bunching up of the trimming or goods, such as is sometimes seen in the present Princess mode, directly over the abdomen. This is not only a very poor way

to suggest the raised waistline but creates the impression of a bad standing posture.

Always remember that any fashion which distorts the form is bad. Therefore, if you have a good figure, don't destroy it with bad lines.

CHAPTER XII

JARGON OF THE THEATRE

THE term "back stage" means to a professional any portion of the theatre, unseen by the spectators, which is given over to the actors, stage hands, electricians, etc. Entrance to this well-guarded realm may be made either through the stage door, usually located in an alley flanking the theatre, or through one placed at the rear of a stage box next to the proscenium arch. The latter is used by managers and persons connected with the front of the house who have business behind the scenes. Between the acts or after a performance, there may pass through it, guided by an usher, important visitors to stars or leading members of the company. During a rehearsal, this same door provides access to the orchestra seats for players who are not needed on the stage. Constructed of heavy metal to conform with fire-department regulations, and often operated by a concealed spring, the door is not for the use of spectators in general. Friends, desiring to visit a player, seek admission at the stage entrance, which is zealously watched by the doorkeeper.

That side of the proscenium arch on which the prompter stood in the old days was known as the "prompt side." To-day it is headquarters for the stage manager throughout the performance, and, from this

place are given his various necessary directions. After calling "Clear," which means that the performance is about to commence and that all people not actually on stage when the curtain rises must immediately leave, he takes up his position on the prompt side and gives the "warning" signal. The "house lights" are put out, the "foots" begin to glow against the curtain, and that in turn, begins its ascent and the "show" is on. This preliminary business is always called "ringing up." To "ring up" or to "ring down" are terms always used when referring to the act of raising or lowering the curtain. A professional never says, "What time does the performance start?" but "What time do we ring up?"

The other side of the proscenium is known as the "O.P." side, that is, the opposite prompt. In some theatres the stage hands take their position here to work the curtain at the stage manager's signal.

"Stage center" is that portion of the stage which, in the old days, was considered by all the actors as the most desirable. In fact, the phrase "taking the stage," applied when a leading man or woman (or, for that matter, any one in the company who got the chance) stalked to a spot on the stage vis-à-vis with the orchestra leader and a trifle below its exact center, and from there delivered the big speech. Vocal style and method of delivery have changed, but the player's love of "taking the stage" remains the same. It is one of the chief tricks in a stock actor's bag.

A time-honored custom of the English-speaking stage is to determine the right or left from the viewpoint of the actor, not that of the audience. Anything on

the actor's right hand as he faces the auditorium is "right," "up right" or "down right." In ancient days, stages were built so that, as they receded from the footlights, they slanted slightly uphill. This may account for the back area being called "up," while the part nearest the proscenium is "down."

Old plays of the romantic and tragic type abound in such directions as "exit," "exeunt omnes," "sits R.," "enters U.L.C.," "crosses L.," etc. To an old stock actor, "U.L.C." meant that either an entrance, exit or some other business would require him to be on the *upper* part of the stage to the *left* of the *center*. To such guidance of the players did the dramatists of other days frequently confine themselves.

"Strike" is called by the stage manager after the curtain has fallen on the last bow. This is a signal for the stage hands to wreck the scenery of Act I and replace it with that of Act II. All the actors must at once retire to their dressing rooms and not return until the new set and "props" are in place, which is announced by the call of "Second act."

"Stand by" is an expression used by the stage manager after calling the act. All who are to take part are warned to be at their entrances before the cue is given.

"Half-hour" is called outside the dressing room doors to notify the actor that only so much time remains until the curtain rises.

"Fifteen minutes" follows, usually given in a more vociferous fashion.

Five minutes before the rise of the curtain, the call

of "Places, first act," or "Everybody down for the first act," is fairly shouted at full lung power.

"Out front," or "the front of the house," means the auditorium. When a professional speaks of "the house," or "how's the house to-night?" he has in mind the business that is being done.

"Up in the part" signifies that an actor has learned the lines and business of a character not one for which he is cast, and feels qualified "to go on in it" or, play it.

"Sign up" is the term employed when a player writes his name on the contract.

"A call" is short for curtain call.

"The call" is a notice to the company regarding the hour of the next rehearsal, or, when traveling, it may be a bulletin containing information as to the name of the railway station from which the company will leave, the railroad to be used, time of train's departure, any junction changes involved, the point of destination, the name of the theatre to be "played" and a list of hotels with their professional rates.

"The road" was the old-time troupers' name for the route over which they took their way.

"A stand" means the city or town in which the next performance is to be given. A "one-night stand" designates a small town in which a company gives only one performance. When "the road" flourished, many companies played nothing else, roaming the East, South and Middle West, from coast to coast throughout the entire season. If a play became a sensational Broadway hit, like "Charley's Aunt," for instance, other com-

panies were sent out, each covering a certain territory and known as "eastern," "western," etc. Some actors played the same part for several successive seasons. The only "week stands" were in large cities.

Once gathered at the railway station and taken in charge by the business manager, who shouldered all matters concerning transportation, the members of the cast existed only as "company" during the entire "jump," as the journey to the next stand was called. On a day run, they might have been found scattered the length of the train, from smoking car to diner (providing they were lucky enough to find such a luxury attached!). Ticketless, when accosted by the conductor, each would answer according to his mood, "Company." There is an old, old yarn about the Irishman who, after noticing several persons who seemingly were allowed to ride free because they said "company," thought he'd try the same trick. When the conductor approached him he blurted boldly, "Company." The official, suspicious, asked, "What company?" and Pat, nothing daunted, replied truthfully, "Knickerbocker Ice Company."

"Letter perfect" is an expression used by the director after an act has been given reading rehearsals sufficient to map out the business roughly. He will then call out, "Everybody letter perfect on this act at rehearsal to-morrow." This means that no one will be allowed to rehearse with his typed part in hand. It will amaze you to find how very much easier it is to memorize "sides" after you have moved through the mechanics of the stage business several times. The contact with

the other players infuses warmth into the lines and the part begins to live.

The "call board" hangs inside the stage entrance of every theatre in close proximity to the letter rack and the hooks for the dressing room keys. On it are posted all notices intended for the company.

CHAPTER XIII

STAGE BUSINESS

THERE are various terms common to the work of production, some of which readily explain themselves. For example, the expression "stage business" means the situations and action resultant on two or more characters coming in contact in the scene. It consists primarily in the director's worked-out plans for crosses, entrances, and exits, and in the author's often elaborate ideas as to "business" which he offers in "the script," the usual abbreviation for manuscript.

During rehearsals, the exact cue is settled on for sitting, rising, opening a box, placing a vase, cocking a pistol, raising a window or making any of the hundreds of movements necessary to the action of a play. These bits are worked out and rehearsed until they run like clockwork and are no longer considered as "business" by the actor. If a good one, he is so living the part that when the time arrives for the first performance, the very touch given a door knob will be in tune with the feeling of the character at that particular moment.

Modern manuscripts devote whole pages to the business as imagined by the author, much of which is condemned as impracticable by the director during rehearsals. Printed copies of plays, which are usually

not made until after production, contain only the business actually used, together with detailed directions as to lighting and properties. Some are illustrated with reproductions of the original cast; these serve as a guide for future costuming. In society dramas of a few years back, however, unless there is some historical event introduced, this is usually brought up-to-date.

All acting should be merely the result of the mingling of human beings in a bit of life depicted on the stage. A character enters, encounters another, and that which transpires depends on their moods. This sounds very simple, but in order to express clearly to the audience the state of mind and the feelings of these two people, every step and turn must be thought out. The greater the director, the more painstaking will he be. Mr. David Belasco, rehearsing a new play, spent fully half an hour endeavoring to get a well-known actor through a door in the right way. He tried it many times himself, using different pauses and turns; the player essayed to capture the same feeling but preferred still another mode of advance. Mr. Belasco did not insist on his own idea, an infinitely better one, being conformed to, but gave the actor carte blanche. At the final dress rehearsal the entire bit of business, which in the actual playing consumed hardly thirty seconds, was done in still a different way!

Stage business must never be confused or jumbled in the eyes of the audience. Suppose two boys are jumping up and down behind chairs playing peek-a-boo. The action must appear photographically clean cut. In

order to avoid confusion, the young actors will have first to be mechanically perfect in their movements, and then use their brains at the performance.

A butler taking coat, hat and gloves from a caller must make no fumbling motions, the same being true in any instance where there is an exchange of props between players. It is imperative that the action should run like well-oiled machinery.

Be careful that business does not use up too much time, or the audience may become restless.

In extinguishing any sort of stage light, be sure to keep the hand on the button or switch until the electrician is working in unison with you. To make the motion of turning it off and then take several steps away from the lamp before it actually goes out, renders a player ridiculous.

When the stage business calls for the burning of an important paper or, in fact, anything that can be destroyed in a fireplace, the article should always be placed back of the coals or logs so that the audience cannot see whether or not it bursts into flames. As red and amber electric light bulbs cunningly disposed create the pleasant glow, ignition will not occur; therefore, to allow the letter to remain in full view and then proceed to talk about having forever destroyed the telltale evidence, will cause the ever watchful audience to smile incredulously; the result—broken illusion.

In real life, when things are dropped, we pick them up. Therefore, if you accidentally let fall a glove, handkerchief or anything else, do not become paralyzed

when confronted by such a contretemps but do the most natural thing in a simple, easy way. An actor standing near an actress should, as a gentleman would in ordinary intercourse, retrieve it for her. To meet the unexpected, naturally, shows dramatic instinct and an acquisition of stage ease.

Frequently, it becomes the business of a player to lift a chair on which he has been sitting and place it against the scenery at some prearranged spot, in order to clear the stage for a succeeding scene. This should be accomplished in a casual way and, above all things, never forgotten.

Always be sure that a cigarette is extinguished when depositing the stub on an ash tray; any smoke arising is sure to distract the onlookers, and to render some of them nervous.

In modern plays the burden of the stage business often falls to the lot of the butler or maid. Serving tea unobtrusively to several people in a definite space of time requires practice. Waiting on a dinner table, which may involve handling without accident plates of soup and pouring many glasses of wine, is an arduous undertaking. All beginners should remember that liquids intended for stage consumption, such as coffee, tea, wine, etc., are served sparingly. When pouring, never fill up the cup; no one in the audience can see into it. Partially filled, a cup or glass can be handled with greater safety and ease. Ginger ale and soft drinks selected for their color are substituted for wine and liqueurs and, when served, are usually flat. If he is called upon to drain several glasses, the personal

taste of the actor is consulted, as neither his stomach nor voice must be made to suffer.

The imitation food that once graced stage banquet boards has largely given way to real eatables. Papier-mâché chops, chickens and beefsteaks, also china eggs, dishes of fruit, etc., are still substituted in scenes where all or some of the characters do not actually consume the food, but ever since James A. Herne made the company appearing in his play "Shore Acres" demolish nightly an entire Thanksgiving dinner of turkey, cranberries, mince pie and all the fixings, property men have had frequently to qualify as cooks, or leave a standing order with a near-by caterer.

CHAPTER XIV

DIRECTING

IF your ambition is to become a director, you must first work in the theatre as an actor. While awaiting an opportunity to test your ability for directing, acquire an intelligent understanding of all the things that an accomplished actor is master of.

Some directors are great but unknown actors. They can, on the instant, become any character in the play. Others employ a subtle method of suggestion which works on the imagination of the player, leading him on to the result desired. There are coldly intellectual, cuttingly sarcastic directors, artists to their finger tips, modeling and chiseling like sculptors, building up here and cutting down there until the work is perfect and the ideal lives. Some men cannot direct without swearing. There are still others who work themselves into a frenzy of emotion in the endeavor to pile the movement of a play up to a climax. When rehearsals are nearing completion, this type, although not actually on the stage, is acting the part simultaneously with the actor; up and down the aisles, back and forth through the rows of orchestra seats, his lips murmuring the lines, shoulders hunched, body fairly vibrating with pent-up feeling, goes this superdirector, bent on getting what he wants. Measuring the actor's rendition by his

own, he will heckle and storm at the least coldness or slowing up in the tempo. At the same time, his eyes sweep the stage, watching the reaction displayed by all other participants in the scene. Woe to them if they are caught out of character.

Directors sometimes encounter a young girl who, either through lack of emotional experience or imagination, is cold and unresponsive. Some of them can so work on her feelings by goading her through a scene many times that she will finally, in an exasperated frenzy, so give way to emotion that it becomes a veritable torrent. Curiously enough, if this is accomplished as the rehearsals near completion, the girl can repeat it, or come so very near doing so that the act is carried to a big curtain. She has caught the trick of giving in to her feelings and letting herself go. She has become unafraid. The director must see that her brain is at all times directing, not criticizing. Emotion moves, but in stage work it requires as much assistance from the brain as do the legs. The director must also see that the actress does not let her emotion make her inarticulate; this would ruin everything.

It is desirable that a director should have a sense of perspective, spacing, and group arrangement allied to a knowledge of color harmony. His stage corresponds to the canvas of a painter. With a strong sense of dramatic values, he will be able to interest his audience keenly. A good play, of course, is a great help to this end.

If your inclination is toward this branch of the actor's art, make a little toy stage, take some standard

play and out of cardboard fashion figures to represent its various characters. Without regard for the established stage business noted in the book, work out the action of the play as you see it. Entrances, the shifting of groups, stage crosses and exits can be tried out with the cardboard puppets and the results jotted down. The movement will be merely mechanical, however, unless you know your stage and the value of its parts.

Around the center of the stage are found the most vital spots for situations and effects calculated to arouse the emotions of the spectator. In "Street Scene" the interest of the audience is constantly centered on the ever-shifting groups of characters congregated on the brownstone steps of a New York walk-up flat, whose main entrance is slightly to right center, permitting the window, with its lowered shade behind which the murder is committed, to occupy a position somewhat to the left of the center; the author has added to the centralization of this window by placing it on the second floor, where it becomes more conspicuous to the entire house.

Many other instances can be recalled in which interest has been cleverly focused to stage center by the author, director and producer. In "Interference" the door leading out from the apartment to the elevator was placed up stage center and constructed with a translucent glass panel; this allowed the shadow of any person seeking entrance to be seen by the audience. The scene was darkened following the commission of a murder, and various persons mixed up in the plot used the door, which, after the discovery of the body,

was made vital to the action by the arrival of doctors and police officers.

A delightful bit of comedy occurred at the close of Act II of "The Love Duel," wherein a double glass door up stage center which led to a bedroom was used to incite jealousy in the breast of a lover who had just been ushered into the darkened room without, by showing him the shadow of his sweetheart, played by Ethel Barrymore, in the arms of a supposed admirer who happened to be no other than the elderly family doctor whom she had taken into her confidence.

And there was that famous lady over in Hoboken who, being "neither maid, wife, nor widow," decided one dark night on a cold plunge in the Hudson. She advanced on the wharf to stage center, before doing her Kellermann. The big splash, at precisely stage center, had hardly subsided before Old Tom loomed large at stage center with a cry of "I am here!" and dove to the rescue. When the hero is laid on the railroad tracks in this same thriller, every eye in the audience is fixed on the Hoboken tunnel opening placed exactly at stage center. Louder and louder comes the sound of wheels, nearer and nearer approaches the train upon its helpless victim, and finally emerges into view just as Old Tom qualifies for another medal of valor. Boucicault, the author of "After Dark," or Gribble, the director, or both, knew their stage. If the tunnel opening had been on the right or left of the stage, the effect upon one-half the audience would have been greatly reduced.

Staircases have always offered spots for centralized

attention, the scene staged in "The Shanghai Gesture" being a well-remembered one. Upon them, many a famous fall has been taken. Dancing up and down the steps, the leading man and woman of "The Count of Luxembourg" gave us the famous Staircase Waltz.

In the brilliant play, "The Royal Family," not only did it make that one perfect set unforgetable, but the staircase was almost starred. On its center platform appeared Julie and Fanny, each provided with an entrance which would make glad the heart of any actor. Foils clashed and rattled the whole of its length throughout Otto Kruger's dashing entrance made while fencing. Fanny felt the warning of Fate on it.

At the end of this play, the attention of the house is focused on a hand holding a wine glass, for that is all we can see of Fanny, sunken deep in a great, winged armchair faced away from the foots, so that she is vis-à-vis with the portrait of her dead husband. When the hand, in searching out the little table at her side, wavers, flutters and drops, we know that as far as this world is concerned her trouping days are over.

In "The Rejuvenation of Aunt Mary," a long stairway running down the left side of the set was the means of eliciting a burst of laughter from many an appreciative housewife. After making everything secure for the night, May Robson, playing the star part, started to retire to her bedroom upon the second floor, but she was so laden down with articles that belonged upstairs that she was obliged to lift them step by step ahead of her as she climbed upward. This brought the act to an uproarious finish.

Characters placed at the extreme left or right cannot dominate by reason of their position which, in most theatres, puts them beyond the line of sight commanded by some of the spectators.

You should always endeavor to preserve a unity of interest. The character speaking focuses the attention; so also, if speaking, does a new entrant upon the scene. The others, as a rule facing the speaker of the moment, become subordinate for the time being. Thus the attention is shifted backward and forward, up and down the set. A character so far down stage that, in order to face the others, he is forced to turn his back on the audience, becomes inferior to the players faced. In Act II of "The Love Duel," although five or six characters are on the stage at the same time, the director has managed to focus unbroken attention on Ethel Barrymore throughout a series of scenes during which, from her position on a sofa at left center, she summons to her various players in a bridge game which occupies an alcoved window up stage right. She remains seated facing the audience while she converses and each actor is in turn made inferior by the position assumed. Naturally, Miss Barrymore commands practically all of our attention anyway, but the method used in staging this scene would make a dominant figure of any one assuming the part. However, if one of the actors had turned his back on the star, which good manners precluded in this instance, and had spoken toward the auditorium, instantly all the attention, if only for a few seconds, would have gone to him.

Notice Diagram 11. On this, X represents an im-

portant character who has been allowed to sit down at the extreme right with her profile to the audience throughout most of an act in which she should be the most important character. A mistake such as this on the part of the director would ruin the act.

If the roll-top desk which, in "The Front Page," was used to hide the escaped criminal had been placed down stage at the extreme left or right, it would not have

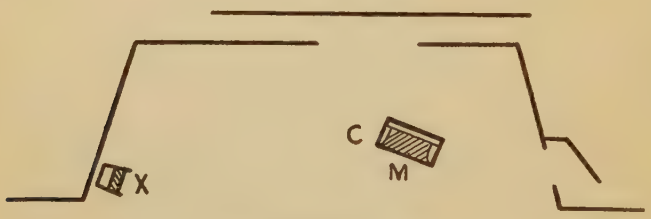

DIAGRAM 11

A MISTAKE IN DIRECTING

C, stage center. X, the most important character, has been seated down right where she cannot dominate; if she had been placed at M, the reverse would have been the case.

been so effective. At left center, it kept the audience keenly alert.

Notice Diagram 12. In this, X represents an old fisherman who has come to tell of the drowning of a leading character. The dotted line shows how an inefficient director has allowed him to sidle down the extreme left of the set and stand at the left of a breakfast table which occupies left center. At this table are seated the leading woman, the second lead and the character woman, the first two of whom are forced to twist in their chairs in order to face left, while the

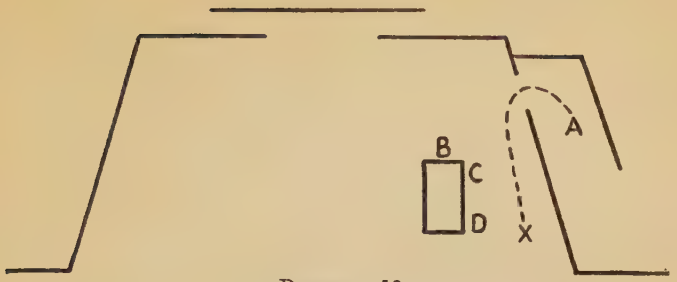

DIAGRAM 12

EQUILIBRIUM DESTROYED AND ATTENTION DECENTRALIZED

A enters and goes to X to tell his story. All the characters are at one side of the stage facing away from stage center.

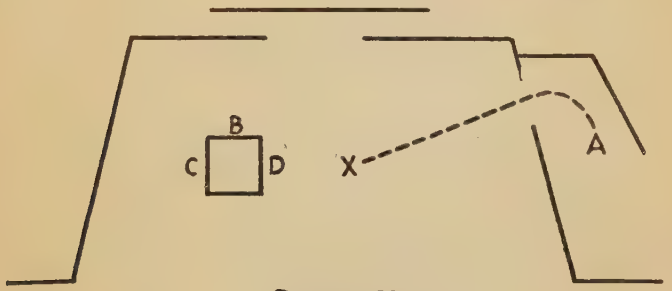

DIAGRAM 13

A BALANCED PICTURE

If A had crossed to X, as on this diagram, and the table had been placed at right center, the balance would have been retained.

fisherman, whose scene it is, is obliged to present his profile to the audience in a most undesirable part of the stage and from there tell his rather long story. One-half of the stage remains vacant while all the characters are huddled to one side; thus equilibrium is destroyed and attention decentralized. See Diagram 13 which presents a balanced and effective picture.

From the foregoing illustration, you can seek balance in the handling of groups. This is applicable when the stage holds only three people. By a simple stage cross on the part of one actor, equilibrium is established. (See Diagrams 14 and 15.)

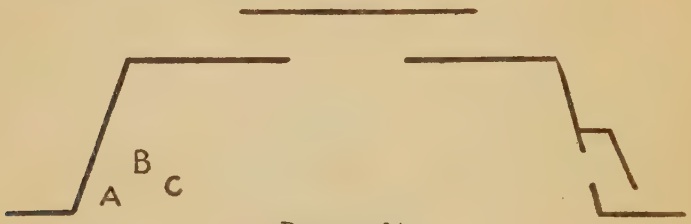

DIAGRAM 14
AN UNBALANCED STAGE

A, B and C are standing in a group down right. The stage is unbalanced.

DIAGRAM 15
EQUILIBRIUM ESTABLISHED BY A STAGE CROSS

If A goes to X, and B drops down to the position formerly occupied by A, the stage will be balanced.

Handling a mob scene requires an expert. The audience must be presented with a series of photographs in which the action and emotional interest are built up to a climax. Harmony in line and color grouping must be worked in.

Each scene has its tempo and its rhythm, and it is the director's job to see that they are not broken. The atmosphere of a play must be emphasized. The conventionalities of life must be kept in mind. For instance, you could not allow the actor representing the host to remain standing throughout half the scene with

DIAGRAM 16

THE CONVENTIONALITIES UNOBSERVED

B, the host, is allowed to stand down stage with his back to A, a lady visitor, during most of the scene in which they are the only characters.

his back to a lady calling, especially when she is the only other character in it. (See Diagram 16.)

Being a good showman, and having a very beautiful leading woman whom the audience greatly desires to see, you will not seat her during her big scene on the up stage side of a rather large table placed at the left of the set. This would be bad enough in itself, but to leave a siphon and several bottles standing on the table so that her face is entirely covered—well, the most amiable of leading women would become temperamental.

When several partake of a meal, the chairs should be arranged about the table so that the characters on

the down stage side do not cover those seated facing the audience. Even the back of an empty chair may throw a shadow, while too strong foots will cause a wide table to block out completely the faces of those sitting on its up stage side.

In furnishing, a painting intended to bring out an atmosphere or point can, by its striking color or prominent position, be made more conspicuous than others

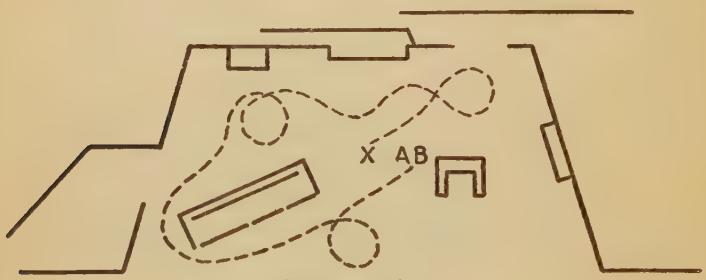

DIAGRAM 17

TIMING ACTION TO THE SPOKEN WORD

A and B start to dance. The dotted line shows how A can lead and, by introducing turns, allow the audience to see B when she speaks.

which may hang about the walls. A picture which is too obvious and not of any importance to the development of the plot is bad; it will succeed in distracting attention from the play.

A mirror whose surface has not been dulled must be hung with great care, so that there will be no reflection from either back stage or audience. Aluminum is sometimes substituted for glass.

If you find that the stage business requires a couple

to dance about a room, see that they do not constantly cover the same spot. The man should lead about the vacant floor space, manœuvering so that the girl's face will be toward the audience while she is speaking. (Notice Diagram 17.)

When two characters are seated on a sofa which faces center, the player on the up stage end should sit forward, the one on the lower, well back in order not

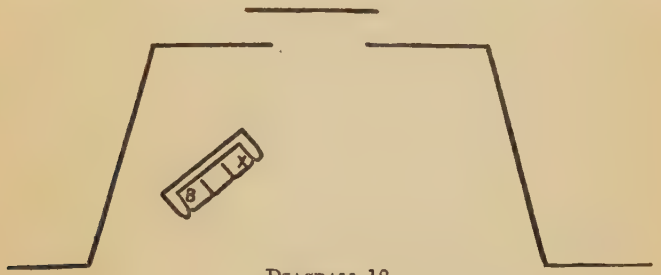

DIAGRAM 18

TO AVOID "COVERING" WHEN SEATED

X, at the up stage end of the sofa, should sit forward in order to be in the picture while B must sit well back in the lower corner in order not to cover X.

to cover the other. The director must be constantly on the *qui vive* to prevent "covering" or his picture will be spoiled. (See Diagram 18.)

See that the actors try all the doors which they are required to open or shut, for it would cause a laugh to watch a player endeavoring ineffectually to pull a door the wrong way in his own house. Frequently, stage doors open out of a room; in real life, the opposite is true. In modern houses, the service portion is well shut away, but square openings and curtained

arches separate the rooms wherein the family gather. Bedrooms, of course, have doors, but these, in private houses, stand open during most of the daylight hours. It is on the stage, however, that, like the little child in the nursery rhyme, you must "shut the door after you and you'll never be chid." Strange that so many plays call for this form of business, for the vistas opened up through a doorway can create so much illusion. In "Seventeen," the porch of a country house extends across the stage from up right to up left. Through an open hall door, one sees the stairway ascending, a hatrack, etc.; through the adjacent windows the audience obtains glimpses of life within a lighted sitting room. In an easy chair the father reads an evening paper by the light of a lamp on the table at his side, while the mother, in a rocker, is busy with some fancy work.

The backing, seen when a door is opened, can be painted to represent some room devoted to a different use, with a piece of furniture strengthening the effect still more; a bookcase, for instance, would suggest a library. Through an arched doorway one occasionally glimpses a dressing table, possibly with softly shaded lights upon it, or the foot of a prettily covered bed. Bathrooms with shining fixtures and white tiling figure in many comedies. A doctor's consulting office may show a room beyond with shelves of labeled bottles and polished surgical instruments. Mr. Belasco is a past master at leading the imagination to things farther on, thus enhancing the illusion.

Sixty or seventy years ago, stock companies located in every city were visited by traveling stars. Each theatre furnished the scenery for the repertoire to be given. The scene plot, which was supplied in advance, serves to show what strides have been made in our theatre of to-day. It read somewhat after the fashion of the following outline, the first column telling what style of scenery was required, the last giving the number of the groove into which it was to be fitted. Each act was divided into several scenes; thus, anything described as "set" had to be placed either while the act drop was down, or during the playing of a front scene. The changes of scenery were made by raising and lowering different flats, and by pieces of appropriately painted canvas placed in grooves at right and left.

"For Her Sake"

ACT I

SCENE	PLOT			
Woods	1	Landscape	in	2
Kitchens	2	Interior of Butterfly Farm Door L.F. used. Window, R.F.	in	3

ACT II

Cellar	1	Cheap Wine Shop in Dover Bar X the back.	in	3
Street	2	Street in Dover	in	1
Fancy	3	Rich drawing-room C. doors open. Stairs, L.3.E. Window R.2.E.	in	3
Street	4	Street in Dover	in	1
Fancy	5	Same as Act II, scene 3	in	3

ACT III

SCENE	PLOT			
Kitchens	1	Interior of Butterfly Farm Same as Act I, scene 2	in	3
Woods	2	Landscape Set wall, R.2.E., oblique C.	in	2
Do.	3	Distant Country Set paling X gate open, C.	in	5

ACT IV

Cellar	1	Cheap Wine Shop in Dover Same as Act II, scene 1	in	3
Woods	2	Harley Park Set trees R. and L.C. Set waters, foreground	in	5
Do.	2	Cottage Flats Door used, R.C. Sign over door, "Harley Lodge," and Coat-of-Arms.	in	2
Do.	4	Flower Garden Set manor house, R.3.E.	in	4

Gauze was used as a substitute for glass in windows and doors. Contrast this with the modern scene and property plots described in Chapter XV. It is easy to see that in those days the play was "the thing," to say nothing of the actors.

Being both producer and director doubles your work. You will have many ideas as to scenery and furnishings, consulting with and being constantly in close touch with scenic artist and property man. Reading the play, you visualize the types of actors demanded by the parts; the actual casting becomes your own job. This will be easy in proportion to your experience of life among different classes. When directing, it is indispensable to have an intimate knowledge of the way

in which their little daily actions are performed. For example, you would not insist that an actor who is warming his hands over a blazing log fire lower them until almost in contact with the flames. Where there are butlers, you will not allow gentlemen to enter drawing-rooms with their coats and hats on. And so on through a never ending list.

If something drops, an actor should know enough to pick it up. The director, however, would do well to caution him in such an event to return the article to its proper place. A magazine or book accidentally pushed off a table, if picked up and laid on a sofa, may cause delay and confusion when needed later for some piece of business by another actor who is unable to find it where it is usually.

It will not be your privilege to determine the type of director you would like to be. Nature and personality will settle that. You should study dramatic art in all its branches. A young girl once remarked, "Oh, I don't need to know anything about make-up. I'm going to be a director."

Directing college dramatics and little theatre groups would not help you to a professional opening. Becoming an actor and a stage manager in the real theatre will give you an opportunity sooner. Some talented young men, after having served an apprenticeship in this way, have obtained backing and become producers. It has become quite the thing for very young actors desiring experience as directors to take charge of the dramatics in summer camps.

CHAPTER XV

PROPS

YOU will be a busy actor if, in addition to playing a part, you also fill the post of stage manager. Beside the responsibility of running the stage at all performances, it is your duty while rehearsals are in progress to furnish the property man with what is known as a Property Plot. This is a list enumerating all articles which are to be used by the players during the progress of the play. In the jargon of the profession they are known as "props," and are either placed on the stage in the spot prearranged at rehearsals or, if they are to be carried on by the actors, laid readily at hand on trays or tables off stage.

Conscientious members of the profession make it their business before the act begins to see to it that their "props" are rightly placed. The importance of a prop cannot be too greatly stressed, for the lack of it when needed may ruin a play.

Properties should be used at rehearsals long before the final one. Some amateurs labor under the delusion that the giving of money, etc., can be faked. Let them beware. No audience is ever deceived.

All properties should be handled convincingly. A suitcase is usually packed, and therefore more or less heavy; a market basket containing sugar, butter, tea,

etc., would weigh several pounds at least and should not be carried by the fingers as if it contained feathers. The suitcase, bag, box or basket ought to be filled with what the playwright asks for, or with some convincing substitute.

Once a young amateur, impersonating a doctor, placed his neat and professional-looking bag on a sofa at the center of the stage, whereupon the side facing the audience fell open and out rolled the sole content—a lonely toothbrush. Naturally, the house howled with glee!

Properties influence stage business and necessitate moves decided upon in advance by director, actor and property man. For instance, a butler enters with a box just delivered containing a dressing gown, which the leading man is waiting to don. If this "prop" is to be laid down, a place on which to deposit it must be left clear. If a table, already supporting a lamp, has been selected, the lamp must stand aside in order that the butler will find room for the box. This must be easy to open and the dressing gown arranged in a way that will admit of its being quickly unfolded and correctly held up by the butler for his master to put on.

This applies for all tied packages from which the covering is to be removed. Knots, difficult to undo, hinder the action. Care should be taken in the folding of a dress, in order that an actress may lift it up by the shoulders, and hold it front side out when displaying it against her figure. She will be enabled to accomplish this deftly if the upper front of the dress is on top in the box.

An envelope should not be sealed so tightly that the audience becomes bored while an actress struggles to open it.

Intimate belongings, such as hats, gloves, purses, etc., which have been left on the stage in accordance with directions, can be retrieved by the players on the fall of the curtain. Eventually, these articles would be returned, but to take them personally insures against possible rough treatment. When making an exit, never forget to take this or that with you if ordered to do so by the director. To find a hat occupying his usual chair may seriously incommode a fellow player.

It is your business to see that claps of thunder, heavy showers and all other off stage noises demanded by an author, occur precisely when wanted. To witness a property man and his assistants creating an electrical storm is a show in itself.

If furniture of a certain period is required, this must be mentioned on the plot as "Adam," "Jacobean," "Victorian," etc.

Any desired colors in the furnishings are noted, as a "brown all-over carpet," a "blue vase," "white flowers," etc. If a blue blotter on the desk is considered essential to carry out correctly the general color scheme of the set, the property man must be so advised. It may be that in the dialogue one of the characters compares the color of the leading lady's eyes to that of the blotter. How awful if the uninstructed property man has supplied a pink one!

If attention is to be called to a clock on the stage,

be sure that it marks the hour called for by the playwright.

Should the scene of the play be laid in England, any newspapers or magazines lying scattered about on tables would in all likelihood be English. A true Britisher, with slipper-clad feet thrust to the fireplace, would not be seeking news in a New York daily. But then, of course, the drama may call for a foreign paper.

If stage money is to be handled, the property plot tells exactly its country and denomination.

As a rule, bookcases are filled with painted book backings. If a character is to remove a volume from a certain shelf, a real one is placed ready at hand. If a "red" book is to be picked up in the course of the play, the color is marked on the plot. A novel, mentioned by name, must be faithfully supplied; the same rule following for any sheet music specified.

When given, by the property man, a letter or legal document to use in the first act and again, say, in the third, it is the actor's place to take charge of it for the duration of the play.

If the stage business requires the packing of a bag in the scene, all articles to go in must be enumerated on the property plot.

If grass is wanted, grass mats will be provided of the desired dimensions.

Certain tricks are occasionally resorted to. For instance, a scuttle of coal may be called for, but as it is placed on the hearth no onlooker need know that it has a false bottom and that the coals are only on top.

To ease a fall, the property man sometimes has orders

to place a couple of quilts under the rug or carpet on which the fall is to take place.

If articles of clothing, books, shoes, etc., are to be thrown from a window, a sheet is stretched outside below to prevent the sound of the impact with the floor.

If, at a certain cue a picture, ornament, piece of armor, in fact anything hanging on the wall, is supposed to fall, it is loosened by some one stationed behind the scenery. In "The Thirteenth Chair," the knife seen in the ceiling was worked from above the scenery. To make it fall and stand upright on the table, it was worked by strings off stage.

Sometimes dropped china must be smashed in plain sight of the audience. It is tricky stuff and may persist in remaining intact unless previously broken and lightly glued together. In "The Tragedy of Nan," the breaking of a heavy crockery drinking mug when dropped through careless handling becomes imperative to the action of the play. This requires that the property man rehearse with glues of various strength. A crockery crash happening off stage may be imitated by a trayful of broken china, the noise coming from somewhere near the entrance specified.

When glass is broken during the act, you must see to it that the débris is carefully swept up during the intermission. If the leading woman is to fall on a certain rug, it must be immaculate, or her costume may suffer. Little do the good housewives out front realize what a lot of house cleaning is being done on the other side of the curtain by the property man and his hard-working carpet sweeper.

Packs of playing cards are arranged with certain wanted cards at top and bottom, the rest being held together by an elastic; this prevents fumbling or delay.

If a telephone bell is to be worked off stage, the cue can be watched for through a fireplace opening when the set provides one.

The plot must specify at which side of the stage the motor-car effect and motor-car horn are wanted. These

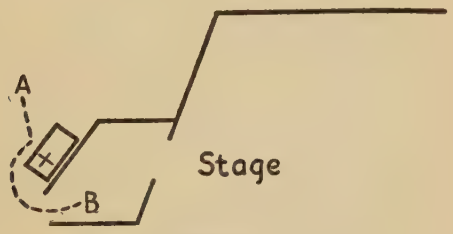

DIAGRAM 19

PLACING THE SIDE PROP TABLE

A picks up his prop from table X, and proceeds to his entrance B.

must be ready to work on cue. If rain is required, the fact should be stated.

Window curtains which are to be pulled aside must not be tacked to the scenery, but arranged to draw on a rod.

So-called side props are those placed on tables off stage. For example, if the player enters down right, he should find his "prop" on a table just outside the door backing. (See Diagram 19.)

If, during an act, a character is to make a change of costume in a time too limited to permit of his

going to his dressing room and returning before his entrance cue, have a section of hinged backing placed off stage right or left, depending on the entrance used; this enclosure, which should contain a table, mirror, chair and an electric bulb, will insure the player privacy. During a long run, if the floor space of the stage is ample, this section of framed canvas is equipped with a door and left standing in some spot where it will not impede the work of the stage hands. Before his or her first entrance in the act, the player will bring to this improvised dressing room all the clothes necessary to the change, also comb, brush, powder, hare's foot and any other indispensable toilet or make-up articles. Nothing must be forgotten. It is a good idea to keep duplicate toilet and make-up necessities in a small case and thus obviate the trouble of picking them up from the array in the dressing room and replacing them. A personal maid is not always at hand and in the theatre an actress must be absolutely independent. Her stardom may be a long, long time in arriving, when quarters built as conveniently near the stage as the architecture will permit of, will be hers. In the meantime, she will be forced to climb countless iron stairs and be her own maid.

A property plot includes everything needed on the stage from the furniture to a match. These lists are variously arranged. While some mention all articles under one head, others carefully separate side or hand props from those actually placed on the stage at the time of setting. Again, clothes provided may have a list to themselves. There is also a memorandum of

perishable props whose stock must be replenished for each performance.

If your property plot is a comprehensive one intended for use in a play which requires but one set, you may submit a list of everything wanted, together with a diagram on which can be designated the exact spot at which all set props must be placed. A diagram (see Diagram 20) and a list made out as follows would cover all requirements:

"The Wisdom of the Serpent"

PROPERTY PLOT

1 Chinese vase, sea green
1 bunch of white chrysanthemums
3 pairs of ecru curtains
3 pairs of green silk curtains
2 Gobelin tapestries
1 Chinese rug, bluish green, 10×12
1 sofa, green brocade
2 armchairs, green brocade
1 long table back of sofa, walnut
1 walnut secretary
1 writing pad
Brass inkstand with ink, pens, etc.
1 side table
1 folding card table
2 matching Chinese vases
2 bunches of yellow chrysanthemums
1 Italian pottery bowl
1 bunch of purple asters
1 ground cloth
4 pillows, green, gold and cream.
1 piano
1 yellow drape embroidered in gold

1 bench
3 small walnut chairs with green brocade seats
2 brass candlesticks with green candles
1 tea cart
5 magazines, American and English
10 prop books
5 New York newspapers, including a *Wall Street Journal*
1 deck playing cards
4 boxes of cigarettes
Humidor
Cigars
4 boxes of matches
1 candy box with candy
2 tennis racquets

If you prefer to offer a separate Hand Prop Plot, including a side plot, it could be arranged like this:

"When Greek Meets Greek"

ACT I

HAND AND SIDE PROPERTY PLOT

On piano
  Vase of La France roses
  Large photograph of the star (or leading woman) in a silver frame
  Silver scarf
On table L.
  Cigarette box and cigarettes
  Silver tray with decanters of Scotch and rye
  Siphon in holder. 4 highball glasses
  Ash tray and match tray
  Vase with pink carnations and ferns
On table down R.
  Silver tray with a tea service of Dresden china, viz.,

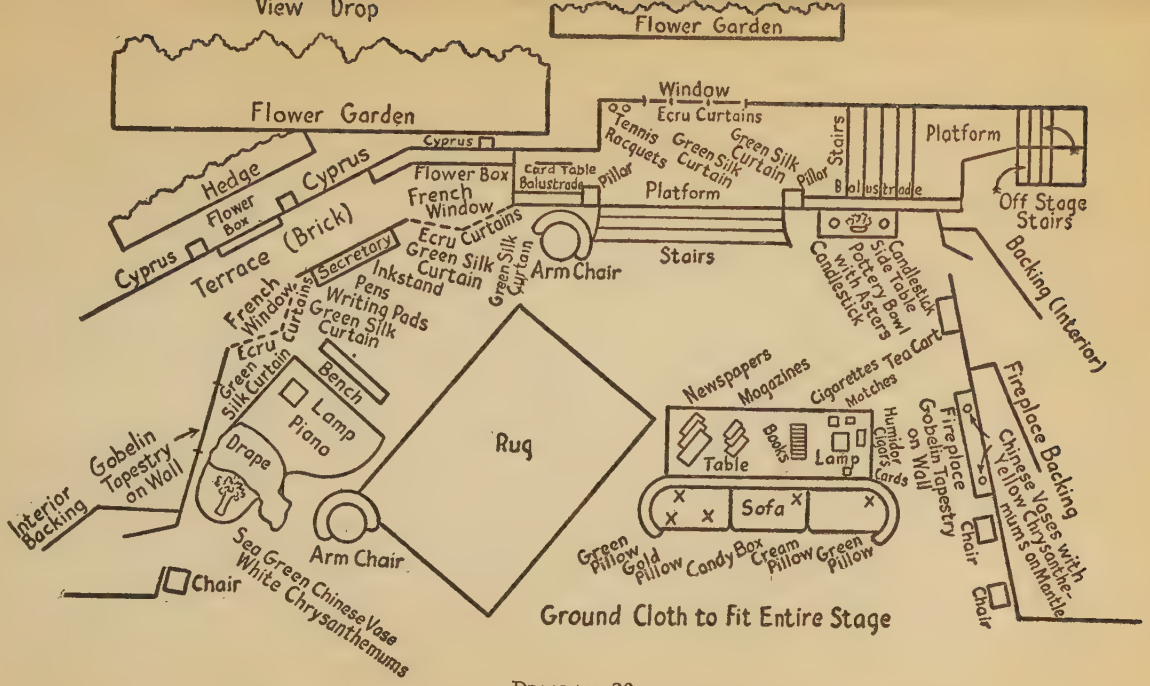

DIAGRAM 20

SCENE AND PROPERTY PLOT FOR "THE WISDOM OF THE SERPENT"

cream pitcher, sugar bowl, slop bowl, silver tongs, silver plate with doily and small cakes, 6 slices of lemon on silver saucer

Off L.

1. Tray (for George) with sandwiches
2. Tray (for James) with teapot (tea made) and hot water
3. Cigars (for Lord Blessington)
4. Cigarette case, filled (for Gloria)
5. English newspapers (for Sir Henry and Gloria)

Off R.

1. Lighted cigarette in long holder (for Alice)
2. Note case and English money (for Cowley)
3. Emerald bracelet (for Gloria)

Perishable props include all food and drink actually consumed by the actors, handled flowers, china or glassware to be broken, etc. If a basket is carried on the stage containing, for example, several boxes of strawberries, of which only one is used, this one must contain real fruit. You would prepare a list of perishable props after this fashion:

"Burnt Bridges"

ACT I

PERISHABLE PROPERTY LIST

1 bunch of pink roses
1 glass for picture frame, 8×10 inches
5 bottles of ginger ale
½ lb. butter
1 pie cut in 6 pieces
1 chocolate layer cake, 6 slices cut
1 pitcher lemonade

6 slices of bread,
6 lamb chops on platter (3 broiled, 3 papier mâché)
2 bananas sliced in open vegetable dish
2 hard-boiled eggs sliced in open vegetable dish
Make pot of coffee off stage and fill silver pot to carry on

The characters upon whom the weight of dialogue rests will have less time for eating; therefore, they may be served with the papier-mâché chops; helpings of the bananas and eggs, which are substituted for regular vegetables because they are more easily cut and masticated, will provide them with sufficient food to maintain an effect of realism.

Any props in the way of clothing, supplied by the management for stage business, are listed on the property plot as follows:

Ermine evening wrap for Sylvia
Brown checked apron for Mary
Brown velvet smoking jacket for Richard

If a breakfast table is to be set for a family of eight, you must not only enumerate every article needed, which will call for careful planning, but also in the event that one or more of the characters come late for breakfast, make provision for extra service. A prop plot covering approximately what might be wanted would read like this:

1 blue and white breakfast cloth
8 blue and white breakfast napkins
1 blue glass flower bowl with white roses
1 embroidered centerpiece
2 melons each cut in quarters

8 fruit plates each containing slice of melon
8 glasses of ice water
Salt and pepper service for eight
8 medium plates, 8 bread and butter plates
8 breakfast cups and saucers on a tray
Sugar tongs
Sugar bowl with sugar
Plate of butter and butter knife
8 butter spreaders
8 spoons
8 fruit spoons
On table off R.
  2 silver trays
  Coffee urn and coffee (for five)
  1 cream pitcher with cream
  1 plate Parker House rolls
  1 platter of bacon
  1 covered dish with eggs Béchamel
  2 serving spoons and forks

Cold boiled ham or roast beef cut in thin strips can be substituted for bacon, the cooking of which presents a problem; the audience will never discover the difference. Only small portions of food are prepared, for the actors, unless playing hearty eaters, will really consume very little. Coffee cups are only half filled.

If Act III remains set as for Act II, it may be necessary to remove certain pieces of furniture and other props, and, in some cases, to replace them by different ones. Arrange your list for Act III like this:

Strike armchair
Strike red book
Strike evening newspaper
Strike white tablecloth
Replace 54×54 in. blue printed linen cloth on table

CHAPTER XVI

LIGHTS

THE huge switchboards installed in modern theatres present a bewildering array of levers; pulling a wrong one may ruin a performance. Intricate lighting effects are demanded by modern productions and call for careful working out and timing on the part of director and head electricians. As some plays require light plots numbering one hundred cues, their job at rehearsals is an arduous one.

Expert manipulation of the switchboard at performances is indispensable. The sun must neither rise nor set in jerks. When the changing of color in the increasing flood of light is so blended, so gradually developed that the audience receives no hint of the mechanism employed, then we obtain the most perfect lighting and illusion.

As one of the players speaks a given line, the chief electrician and his aids must work designated levers without delay. Reading lamps and wall fixtures must operate in unison with buttons touched by actors' hands. When the electrician is so placed that he cannot hear a cue or see the action, it devolves on the stage manager to give him a signal by an emphatic drop of his hand.

You, as director or stage manager, must be familiar with various terms used in the working of the lights.

"Full up" means that the lights are to be turned up to their full strength.

"Dim down," of which "take down" is a variation, signifies that the intensity is to be diminished.

To raise or lower the lights gradually, "dimmers," worked by levers on the switchboard, are employed.

"Take up" means a bringing up of the lights until the director (at a rehearsal, of course) calls, "Hold it." If the brilliance is considered adequate, the electrician is ordered to "mark it," which he does by making an annotation on his "light plot."

"Kill it," an expression common among directors and electricians, means to turn out one offending light or a whole border as the situation may require. When the deed is accomplished, the electrician will say, "It's dead." "Block out" is a milder way of ordering the same performance.

"Black out" is the expression used when the entire stage is to be plunged into darkness by moving a lever on the switchboard known as the "bull." This controls all the stage lights.

A "flash" is a light used as a warning signal. If there is an orchestra, a "flash" orders the leader to commence playing.

"Practical," which is sometimes abbreviated to "prac," applies to lamps or fixtures that can be lighted. (It is also employed with reference to doors or windows in scenery. If the business requires a character to open a window, it is ordered made "practical," that is, so constructed that the sash can be easily raised.)

"Spotlights," as all her dear public know, are those

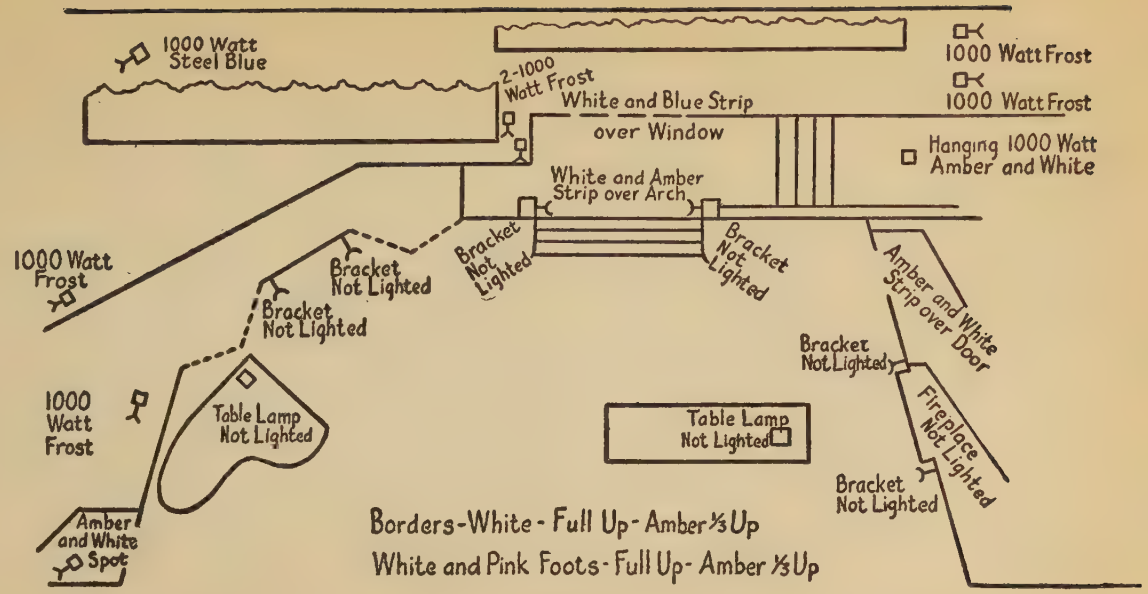
1000 Watt Steel Blue
2-1000 Watt Frost
White and Blue Strip over Window
1000 Watt Frost
1000 Watt Frost
Hanging 1000 Watt Amber and White
White and Amber Strip over Arch
1000 Watt Frost
Bracket Not Lighted
Bracket Not Lighted
Bracket Not Lighted
Bracket Not Lighted
Amber and White Strip over Door
Bracket Not Lighted
1000 Watt Frost
Table Lamp Not Lighted
Table Lamp Not Lighted
Fireplace Not Lighted
Bracket Not Lighted
Amber and White Spot
Borders-White-Full Up-Amber ⅓ Up
White and Pink Foots-Full Up-Amber ⅓ Up

DIAGRAM 21

LIGHT PLOT FOR "THE WISDOM OF THE SERPENT," ACTS I AND II

brilliant white lights projected to the stage from the second balcony to form a halo about the head of a musical comedy star. They also do duty from the wings.

"Baby spots" are small spotlights hidden either on the stage itself or in close proximity to it. Their purpose is to relieve shadows.

"X rays" are incandescent bulbs of from 200 to 500 watts, which are placed in compartments in a long, narrow box. They are variously colored by placing framed gelatine screens over them. The X rays are stood upright in entrances or suspended over the stage, in which case they are often called "borders."

Placed in a large box, a single lamp of 1000 watts serves to illuminate an entrance or window; it is also hung over the stage, and is called an "olivette."

"House lights" are those in the auditorium. Before the curtain is rung up, these, with the exception of all red ones marking fire exits, are turned off. When the curtain falls the audience is in darkness until they are again turned on. If curtain calls are taken after an act, you, as the stage manager, must gauge the amount of applause following each bow. If enthusiastic or "warm," the audience will enjoy clapping and a clever manipulation of the curtain can coax forth an extra tribute. Not until after the last bow is taken do the house lights come up for the intermission. Where the play is a box-office hit and in for a long run, the calls are all arranged and the bows allotted to show off the company from its humblest members to the two leading players or the star. These last mentioned, privileged mortals, however, can take as many bows as

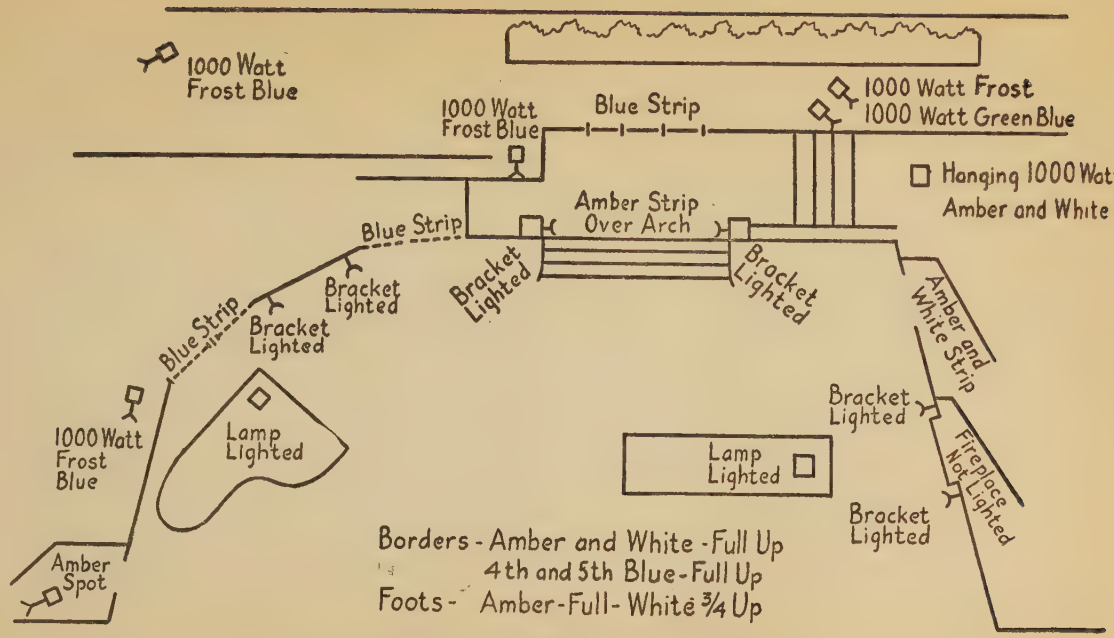

DIAGRAM 22

LIGHT PLOT FOR "THE WISDOM OF THE SERPENT," ACT III

the house demands of them. Some producers, preferring not to break the continuity of the play, allow demonstrations of approval only at the end. The tempo at which the curtain is lowered is regulated by the mood of the scene just completed. If there has been a crescendo of mirth or exciting action, a "quick" curtain follows, while a "slow" one is used on scenes either of sorrow or of imposing grandeur. There is one more speed called "medium." If, in the lowering of the curtain, there is any hitch or delay, dramatic instinct will keep a professional from dropping out of character until the mishap is righted.

The final curtain remains lowered until the last spectator has filed out of the theatre. It is then raised, disclosing a first act set, or likelier still, a vast, empty stage. In the center of the apron back of the extinguished footlights is placed one small light supported on an iron standard. Until theatre and actors begin to prepare for the next performance, in token of which the curtain will again be lowered, this solitary sentinel stands guard in the gloom and silence of the great, deserted building. It is called the "pilot light."

Of the various colors used in stage lighting you will find that amber, pink, blue and white are the most popular. Of these, amber, pink and white (the latter used in frosted bulbs) serve for daylight effects, while blue is for moonlight.

Consider a play requiring only one set, an interior, with the action covering some twelve hours. At the rise, the room shows the fading light of a summer evening, amber being the only color working. During the

act, the off stage 1000-watt lights, together with the foots and X rays, are changed to moonlight blue; the table lamp remains amber.

The second act calls for a dark stage with fading moonlight coming in at the windows. Through these and on the backing, play spots of blue, while the same color on dimmers is used in the foots and the borders.

In the last act the audience sees the same room flooded with brilliant sunshine at half-past eight the next morning. The foots are amber and white, while the 1000 watts and X rays are all amber and pink.

If during the second act the room had been suddenly lit up, all the pinks and ambers would have been turned on in the foots and the borders, while the window light (blue) would have been dimmed.

Small lights placed in rows called "strips" are arranged behind the scenery to light entrances, hallways, etc. They are in different combinations of color, pink and white frost, amber and white, or blue and white, as required.

Clear, brilliant lighting is obtained with pink and white frosted circuits in foots and X rays combined with amber baby spots.

Pink in the lighting is always flattering to make-up; too much amber takes away from a woman's delicate coloring.

To produce the effect of sunset light coming through a window, change the two pink and amber 1000 watts standing off stage to red and blue. In order to realize the advances made in stage lighting, contrast this with the method employed in the middle of the last century

when a piece of real red glass was placed over a limelight to create the same illusion.

Amber, including straw and lemon, and red with all shades of pink, are warm colors and suggest sunshine; blue is a cold color and suitable for night scenes, and, blended with white frost, brings out the chilliness of snow-covered scenery.

The following will serve you as a sample of an electrical or Light Plot:

"On the Spot"

ACT I

LIGHT PLOT

Foots and X ray borders, white and straw, 3 up
Fire grate, R. (practical)
2 brackets R. and L. on back flat (practical)
Electric push button on back flat and bell off stage
2 electric switches on back flat (practical)
1 stand lamp, R.C.
1 small strip light in doorway R.

This would continue for the length of the play accompanied by a Light Cue Plot, which would read in this wise:

1st Cue. When Jane turns out reading lamp, pull white foots and X ray borders.

2nd Cue. When Bob picks up books, goes R.C. and switches out light, pull straw foots and X rays —black out.

3rd Cue. When Bob switches on the lights, the brackets and light L. come up as at opening of scene.

4th Cue. When Bob turns light switch which throws the bracket off, pull white straw foots and white X ray border. Bring white foot dimmer down.

5th Cue. When Jane turns on light by desk throw in straw foots and white X ray borders, then bring up white foots to ¾ mark.

If on the light plot it should read under the head of Act III, "Your lights stand throughout this act," it is understood that they are to remain the way they were when the curtain fell on Act II.

If during an act a front scene is to be introduced, two black outs will be necessary. The Plot should read as follows:

At Cue: Foots, borders and all lights out black
Drop down
Foots and borders up on front scene
At Cue: Foots and borders out black
Drop up
Lights full up on stage set as for Scene 1.

Diagram 21 shows the Scene Plot used in Diagram 20 serving as a Light Plot for the same play which is in three acts, all of them being played in the one set. Diagram 21 shows the lights for the first and second acts, a summer's day, and Diagram 22 is the lighting for the last act which takes place in the evening.

CHAPTER XVII

RADIO BROADCASTING

UNTIL television is made practical in the home, radio acting can only interest or amuse according to the actor's ability to sway our emotions and excite our imaginations by his voice. At the present time radio drama will demand of the players clarity of vocal sound, perfect articulation and intelligent reading of lines. Any defects in their speech will make themselves known at once. A lisp is instantly detected; bad inflection, monotonous delivery, bad pronunciation (and much of each exists) are unpleasant to listening ears.

Actresses with emotional voices are indistinct, the sound being choked back in the throat, and, perhaps because the radio audience cannot be diverted by their beauty, they become not only tiresome to listen to, but absurd.

In a recent rendition of a well-known play the leading woman used a falling inflection not only at the end of each sentence, but also on nearly every phrase. On the stage proper, she would have been considered an extremely poor actress. On the whole, men present much more acceptable characterizations, and, as a rule, English players give us better articulation. For the absolutely perfect radio voice (and, unfortunately, the one least heard) the palm goes to—Charlie Chaplin!

We suspect that it will be a glad, red-letter day for the "talkies" if Charlie ever consents to produce one, although his own voice is not of the comedy type.

Personality is projected to us over the radio, and the voice is its agent. Witness those who heard Al Jolson singing some of the new songs from his new photoplay. This artist jumped in and out of "character" at a tremendous speed, it being necessary to make his own announcements between numbers. From singing with a voice in which the sobs were distinctly heard, he changed abruptly to a matter-of-fact statement, descriptive of his next song. John Barrymore, in an echo of his never-to-be-forgotten Hamlet, succeeded by his artistry in playing on our emotions once more.

Young people will find a simple, unaffected tone of voice (affectation becomes instantly apparent) the most effective. Assuredly, those announcers are the most likable who are seemingly not self-conscious and inclined to be smart-Alecky. Mr. Milton Cross has this lack of affectation to a superlative degree.

In these days, when our American speech as demonstrated in the "talkies" has so jarred the British, why do our most important New York stations tolerate mispronunciation on the part of announcers? It is odd that the youth of this country and our newly arrived citizens are allowed, night after night, to hear New York pronounced New "Yerk," and Detroit called "De-troy-it."

As far as the "talkies" go, it is absurd always to blame their present stage of development for flaws in the actors' voices. That of Ruth Chatterton, for in-

stance, sounded perfectly clear when directed by Lionel Barrymore. In fact, in every film there are some voices that seem quite natural. For example, that of Mae Busch in "Alibi."

Heed this: Don't add a vowel sound to a word. It is a fault particularly noticeable on the part of most radio speakers. Don't raise the voice; an easy conversational pitch is clearer. Memorize your lines, although you play, part in hand; this will help your delivery.

CHAPTER XVIII

FOR AND AGAINST

HOW "to get on the stage" is usually a problem to a stage-struck young person.

There are several ways. The "home" stock company may offer engagements in small parts to amateurs of proved talent. Such experience affords excellent opportunities for the acquiring of stage ease. Chance may knock at the door if a leading member of the cast is taken suddenly ill and you, up in the part, jump in and "make good." Again, important managers or their agents, always on the lookout for "finds," might happen in on a performance and engage you for a Broadway production. Such things have happened.

New York City being the main battle ground, a journey to it is the first dream to come true for many an ambitious boy and girl. Once arrived, various avenues of advance and attack open up, one of which necessitates subjugating the office boys into allowing you to hound the managers. Occasionally, through pure nerve, having a striking personality or happening to be a sought-after type, some intrepid girl succeeds in harassing one into giving her a chance to read a part, following the failure or success of which undertaking she sinks to ignominious oblivion or swims to deeper waters, i.e., rehearsals and a first performance.

Another way is to work any sort of "pull" for all it is worth. Presented at that opportune moment when casting is about to begin and provided you are physically well-equipped and happen to be of a usable size, this influence may serve to get you started. After that, everything will rest on the ability shown.

A manager or an agent will invariably demand, "What experience have you had?" Many in the know have invented jobs, telling of parts played successfully back in the home town or in some remotely situated stock company. Such fabrications are not only hard to live up to, but the untrained beginner, by breaking all the fundamental laws of the stage at ensuing rehearsals, may bring down on her head the scathing remark from the manager, "I thought you told me you'd had experience," and instant dismissal will follow.

Possessed of unlimited nerve and determined to obtain an engagement, one raw girl, in answer to his inevitable inquiry regarding experience, told a manager that she had appeared as the ingenue of a stock company of a certain Mississippi town during the previous season. He plied her with questions, the girl blundering on with her invented tale until he contemptuously cut her short with the announcement that he had been the business manager of that particular organization of which most certainly she had formed no part.

There are many dramatic agents who in booking will ask the same bugaboo question. Back home you may be the bright particular star of the Emporia Dramatic Society or as popular as John Gilbert, but these local items will only be met by a look of bored disgust. Con-

sidering that the rounds of the agencies are made day after day by unemployed professionals of experience and proven ability who turn patiently away at the words "nothing to-day," it will be readily seen that little chance exists for you in that quarter. This weary time between engagements when, unless one is professionally so well known that managers make offers, presents a seamy side of the life of theatre folk unthought of by the young dreamer. It is no primrose path and requires courage and endurance.

No one can teach you to act, but if you can afford it and are studiously inclined, the dramatic school offers not only excellent training in the work of the theatre but, provided you prove of stage value, helps you to secure an engagement. Anything like the study of old-fashioned elocution or stereotyped gesturing should be avoided, for to these the principle of modern acting is totally antagonistic.

Every human being, when sufficiently aroused, has a bit of the dramatic in him but it does not follow that everybody is endowed at birth with enough acting ability to warrant taking up the stage as a means of livelihood.

Let us concede that you possess undoubted dramatic talent, are one hundred per cent perfect physically, and that you have intelligence. One thing, however, you may still be without, the lack of which will render you absolutely useless in the theatre. This is charm, a quality difficult to define but made up largely of a strong personality which radiates warmth, gives little human touches to the action and lends soft nuances to the tone of the voice. By such means there is created

a compelling force to which the spectator yields—call it magnetism, charm, what you will. But lacking it, you cannot expect to succeed on the stage. There are so many professions and occupations open to women nowadays that when a young woman is told that charm is wanting she should make up her mind to pursue some other career. If blessed with a large share of pulchritude, she will not be easily convinced. Strange, but charm does not always walk hand-in-hand with beauty.

Ability, charm, intelligence, and a good voice, plus physical perfection—a large order but a good recipe for the making of an actress.

Aside from these very desirable attributes, there should exist a good sound business sense with no end of aggressiveness to back it. Just plain push, enabling one to return persistently after emphatic refusals, has opened the portals to many, while the timid, and perhaps more gifted, have given up the fight. Unfortunately, many artists are devoid of this ability to force themselves and, unless taken up by some one of influence, fare badly.

Aspirants must so love the art of acting that they will be willing to give up everything else and follow it faithfully. There can be little or no social life outside of the theatre. Energy must be conserved and the people who flock about the actor or actress draw upon the forces which are needed for the evening performances. Many of the greatest personalities of the stage have been almost recluses on this account.

There is also the matter of limited time. The day is

either given up to rehearsals, or part of it, if a run is on, is claimed by Morpheus; the manicurist, too, and the beauty specialist take their share.

Personal appearance is a matter demanding constant attention and one of the first requisites is plenty of rest. The professional must look well at all times, not by showing an elaborately painted face, but a rested one. In fact, many of the best actresses use no make-up except for stage use. Nevertheless, they are noticeably well groomed. Rips in sleeves or fur coats, rundown heels, badly put on stockings and careless hair betray a lack of neatness, without which quality it is impossible to look chic.

Only a short part of the day is left for outdoor exercise or motoring. The evening, of course, is monopolized by work. Only at midnight comes the actor's hour of perfect relaxation, when, himself once more, he can enjoy his supper in the company of his family or friends. This, as a rule, follows all performances. People, utterly ignorant of the fatigue the player experiences, are wont to criticize him for thus spending the midnight hour. Little do they know how the reaction to the night's work manifests itself in healthy hunger and thirst. Many a professional never nears the wings for a first entrance without a thrilling of the nerves, although the brain may be perfectly cool. However, that terrible sensation inside of the body, which suggests that the stomach has in some way developed acrobatic tendencies and managed to turn upside down, appears as a rule only before a first performance. On such an occasion, any eating before the final curtain

will probably be out of the question. It is most exhausting, this business of creating a land of make-believe.

A true artist, be he a great celebrity or merely one of the army of unknown professionals, would rather act than eat. The salary is taken not for what is actually done on the stage itself, but for the discomforts that must be put up with and the sacrifices that must be made in order to be an actor. It is absolutely essential that there should be a deep love for the theatre and an irresistible urge impelling one to the life.

The following extracts from a letter written by me years ago while on the "road" playing in a revival of a celebrated play dealing with the French Revolution may serve to throw some light on the atmosphere back stage during a performance. Dated from some wild town out west, the letter was composed in my dressing room, in this case situated under the stage, during an act in which I was not "on."

In my dressing room,
The "Opry House."

Dear ———

Incidental music is being furnished by the Mob upstairs, yelling "To the Guillotine," etc.; also the rumble of the death-cart (which is nothing but the drum from the orchestra placed on a chair and the sticks rolled on it). . . . Ah, more music—a rat in the walls. This theatre is a dream of beauty. . . . Another sound. The stage carpenter has entered the next dressing room where the "noble Delaroche" (M——) is turning himself into an elegant-looking aristocrat, and is chanting "Put on your old grey bonnet." . . . "What, save my father's life?" the heroine

is yelling. . . . There goes the bell for the Tribunal. "Marquis de Ferrand," "Count de Vigny," "Duc de Beaumont." . . . "Ah, save him, save him, I will pay the price," wails the leading lady. . . . Now they are laughing; the comedian has stuck his head in the door. . . . It occurred to me that this would be a good chance to write you—but. . . . "Justice. I want that word and all it signifies!" (The star is on.) Howls from the mob of extras. "That is the voice of Fraternity shrieking for etc., etc." . . . "If an angel in Heaven accused you I would say it was a lie!" . . . Now the tramp of the guards—right over my head. I wish they would select extras with small, delicate feet. "My God, this is some wicked plot." . . . "We may never meet again. Remember my last words; beggars, thieves, assassins may escape complete perdition, but neither here nor hereafter, is there any hope for Judas!"—That is L——'s big speech. I think he is a great artist. He is always doing something while on the stage but yet is perfectly composed. "The man they call a traitor" (the star). Loud whistles from the gallery. . . . There goes the end of the act. I must stop. I'm afraid the theatre is rather a demoralizing place to write a letter in. . . .

To endure this sort of thing night after night and still be happy and content, while other girls of your own age are dancing and engaged in other social pursuits, indicates that you are born to the life. You cannot grumble incessantly and still be a genuine, dyed-in-the-wool trouper. Neither can you enter the stage door of any theatre without getting a thrill when greeted by that curious, elusive back stage smell which exists there but nowhere else on earth.

The beginner has been cautioned against assuming airs. I recall one instance where a conceited and un-

talented amateur, who had been given a chance at professional work through some influence, made himself so thoroughly obnoxious to the entire company that the men started a series of deliberate persecutions, locking him in his dressing room one night, another nailing his trunk to the floor, and putting spirit-gum (which is used for attaching beards to the face) in his street shoes while he was strutting about the stage. The character man offered to teach him how to put on a beard and, upon our hero's accepting eagerly, applied it to his skin with glue. So inordinately self-satisfied was the man, however, that he never realized we were all making fun of him.

You will brush elbows with people of varying degrees of education and from all walks of society. No contamination need follow. Bronson Howard, the great playwright, used to recount the story of the manager who, wishing to book one of his plays, namely, "Young Mrs. Winthrop," wrote the manager of an "opry house" who replied that he would be willing to do so, "if she was any good of an actress."

In no other profession are there to be found so many people working under assumed names. The change is not always made in order to acquire a more striking one. The combination of given and surname may be too long for the program and also a tax on the theatre-goer's attention. Parents sometimes demand that if their daughter will persist in venturing forth into a field at once so glamorous and, traditionally, so naughty, the least she can do will be to preserve the sacred family name from the mire.

Very foreign names are bad, especially if not readily pronounceable. For instance, "Ivan Boralinovitch," unless Russia is being starred, might advantageously be transformed into "Evan Lynn." An actress who has already worked in the theatre prior to her marriage, rarely uses her husband's name except in private life. It is hard enough to impress one name on the memory of a fickle public.

If necessary to select another name, let it be short and well balanced at both ends, one with a good ring and not already known in the profession because this is always confusing to both public and managers. Once I noticed that a young girl student of the drama, one without a vestige of theatrical ability, at that, had changed her name; when I asked the reason, she exclaimed, "Oh, but my own would never look well in electric lights!" The beginner might consider the question from this angle, for one should always aim at the stars.

It is a life of bitter heartaches and sometimes of privation, but oh! the joy of a chuckle from the audience, the warming thrill of a "hand" after an exit, the ecstasy of delight caused by a line of appreciation following the player's name in print.

Actors are wont to condemn their profession but they give their heart's blood for it and unless you can do likewise, don't try to go on the stage.

INDEX

Ability, dramatic, 2, 3, 24, 41 137
Acting, 90
  fashions in modern, 1
  modern, 137
  natural, 9
  radio, 132
  teaching, 51
  theatrical, 9
Action, clean-cut, 90
  climax of, 103
  ease of, 2
Actor, stock, 77, 84, 85
Actress, attributes of, 138
  stock, 78
Agencies, 137
Agent, dramatic, 136
Announcers, radio, 133
Appearance, personal, 139
Apron, stage, 52, 53, 128
Arch, proscenium, 83
Articulation, 36, 47, 95, 132
  defective, 12
  exercises in, 47
  perfect, 12
Athletics, 16
Atmosphere, 140
  bringing out, 104
Attention, decentralized, 102
  distracting, 104
  focused, 98
  focusing, 99, 100
  shifting of, 99
Attitudes, 35, 36
  conventional, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45
Background, social, 27
Backing, 58, 60, 116, 129
  effect of, 106
  entrance, 57
  exterior, 59
  fireplace, 59
Birthmark, 19
Black out, 124, 130, 131
Blue, moonlight, 128, 129
Board, call, 61, 88
Body, zones of, 37
Borders, 126, 129, 130
  x-ray, 131
Bowing, 40, 126
Bracket, to "throw off" a, 131
Breath, timing, 6
Breathing, correct, 46
Brush, baby, 68, 70, 74
Bulb, amber, 81
  frosted, 128
Bull, the, 124
Business, 5
  author's, 89
  cut for, 89
  lines of, 21, 22, 23
  mechanics of, 87
  piece of, 8
  stage, 57, 89, 90, 91, 96, 105, 111, 113
Butler, 7, 27, 91, 92, 109, 111
Button, electric push, 130

Calls, curtain, 60, 86, 126
Carriage, graceful, 28
Casting, 21, 108, 136
Center, stage, 84, 96, 97

Chair, lifting, 92
Character, 21
  dominating, 99, 100
  dropping out of, 59, 95, 128
  getting into, 2, 3, 4, 61, 133
  subordinating a, 99
Characters, disposition of, 99
Charm, 137, 138
Cheekbone, 72
Cheeks, 71
Chin, 70, 71
  weak, 18
Cigarettes, extinguishing, 92
Clear, 84
Climax, 6, 9
  working up, 10
Cloths, paint, 66
Colors, 81
  blending of, 73
  cold, 130
  dark, 81
  harmonizing, 26, 95
  striking, 104
  warm, 130
Comedian, 13, 16, 22
  dressing room, 22
Comedienne, 22
Comedy, 9, 81, 97
  eccentric, 22
Companies, stock, 80, 107, 135
Company, notices for, 88
Cosmetic, 68, 71, 75
Costumes, 60, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81
  designing, 26
  long lines in, 81
  material for, 81
  quick change of, 116
  rearranging, 26
  selecting, 81
Costuming, 78, 79, 80
  period, 80
Covering, 54
  to avoid, 105
Crash, crockery, 114
Cream, cold, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76
Cross, making, 54
  stage, 58, 96, 102
Cue, 5
  entering on, 16
  entrance, 3, 57, 61, 85, 116
  light, 123
  picking up, 6, 7
  working on, 115
Cup, filling a, 92, 122
Curtain, 60
  big, 95, 99
  fall of, 112
  final, 128, 129
  lowering, 84
  manipulation of, 126
  medium, 128
  quick, 128
  raising, 61, 84
  ringing up, 126
  rise of, 85
  slow, 128
  tempo of, 128

Dancing, 17, 25
Defects, facial, 18
  organic, 46
  physical, 31
Deformities, 16
Delivery, monotonous, 132
  sing-song, 13
Dialect, 17, 24
  elimination of, 14
Dimmers, 124, 129
  "bring down," 131
Directing, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 105, 108, 109
  ability for, 94
Director, 8, 40, 52, 54, 55, 63, 77, 81, 87, 89, 94, 95, 99, 100, 103, 105, 108, 109, 111, 123
Doorkeeper, 83

Doors, stage, 83, 105, 106, 141
Drama, modern, 36
Drop, 131
  act, 107
  back, 16, 60
Dyes, 78

Ears, painting, 75
  prominent, 19
East, 12, 32, 92, 135
  to achieve, 2
Education, college, 24
  player's, 26
Emotion, 95
Engagement, hunting an, 135, 136, 137, 138
Entrances, 4, 54, 55, 58, 96, 98, 114, 139
  stage, 83, 88
Equilibrium, 36, 101
Exercises, breathing, 47
  controlling, 29
  relaxing, 29, 31, 32, 46
  walking, 29
Exits, 8, 52, 58, 59, 85, 96, 112
  tragic, 9
Experience, past, 136
Expression, facial, 4, 36, 44, 35
  pouty, 72
  vocal, 50
Eyebrows, 71, 73, 74, 75
Eyelashes, 71, 74
  loading, 75
Eyelids, 72, 73
  shading, 70, 73
Eyes, 67, 70, 71, 72, 76
  cast in, 17
  deep set, 18
  to enlarge, 71, 73, 74

Face, broad, 72
  dragging down the, 72
Fainting, 39
Fall, stage, 31, 40, 98, 113, 114
Fear, elimination of, 2
Fencing, 25
Figure, distorting the, 82
Flash, 124
Flats, 107
  back, 130
Food, 93
Foot, hare's, 68, 71
Footlights, 2, 69, 72, 75, 84, 85, 104, 129, 130
  "pull," 131
  straw, 131
  white, 131

Gestures, 36, 38, 44, 57
  climax of, 36
  direct form of, 32
  graceful, 31, 33
  large, 34
  rapidity of, 36
  small, 34
  sweeping, 35
  wooden, 10, 35
Gesturing, 33, 34, 36
Girls, straight make-up for, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75
  very tall, 22, 79
  very tiny, 22
Grace, exercises for acquiring, 28
Grooves, 107
Grouping, 95
  color, 103
Groups, handling of, 102
  shifting of, 96

Hair, 67, 68, 71
Health, 16
Heels, 79, 81
Height, emphasizing, 81
House, 86
  front of, 53, 83, 86

Illusion, breaking, 9
  creating, 10

Inflection, 48, 132
exercises in, 48
Ingenue, 21, 22, 63, 79
Instinct, dramatic, 11, 21, 92, 128
Intelligence, 1, 2, 10, 12, 24, 50, 137, 138
Interest, centralization of, 96, 98
climax of, 103
focusing, 96
unity of, 99

Jargon, theatrical, 83
Jawbones, large, 18, 72
Jump, 87
Juvenile, 18, 21
make-up for, 68

Key, dressing room, 61, 88
Kneeling, 40

Lamp, amber table, 129
Languages, foreign, 24
Laughing, 46
Laughs, 6, 49, 60
nursing, 6
Laws, fundamental, 52, 54, 136
Lead, second, 21
Letter perfect, 87
Libbing, ad, 5, 59
Life, conventionalities of, 103
social, 138
Lighting, brilliant, 129
clear, 75
deep amber, 67
pink in, 129
stage, 64, 128, 129, 130, 131
strong overhead, 69
Lights, 81, 123, 128, 129, 130
high, 70
house, 84, 126
pilot, 128
strip, 130
Lights—(*continued*)
to bring up, 124
to dim, 124
to put out, 91
Line, 4, 5, 88
curtain, 52, 53, 55, 57
final, 8
harmony in, 103
Liners, 67
Lines, breaking in on, 6
delivery of, 134
memorizing of, 134
other characters, 5
reading, 50
reciting, 12
shouted, 10
Lips, 69, 72, 73
protruding lower, 72
Lisping, 17, 48, 132
to correct, 49
Lotion, astringent, 71

Magnetism, 138
Maid, 7, 26, 27, 92
Make-up, 60, 63, 116, 129
character, 61, 76
juvenile, 64, 65
Manager, stage, 23, 61, 83, 84, 85, 109, 110, 123, 126, 139
Mascaro, black, 71
Materials, make-up, 65
Men, leading, 21, 84
straight make-up for, 67, 69, 70
Moods, 4, 10, 90
altered, 4
unchanging, 4
Mouth, small, 73
Movement, balance of, 30
controlling, 38
harmony of, 30
mechanical, 96
opposition in, 36
Movies, 76

Muscles, overdeveloped, 16
stiffened, 17, 29
weak, 29

Names, professional, 142, 143
Nasality, correction of, 48
Noses, large, 18
tilted, 73
Nose-putty, 19
Nostrils, 73

Olivette, 126
Opposition, law of, 39
Oppositions, 37

Paint, grease, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 74
Pantomime, expressive, 10
Paper, burning a, 91
Part, concentrated on, 2
getting into the, 6
living the, 2, 4, 10
making good in a, 135
reading a, 135
up in a, 86
walking through a, 62
Parts, character, 22, 24
Pauses, 9, 90
Pencil, black, 68, 70, 71, 74
brown, 70, 74
Perfection, physical, 16
Personality, 24, 109, 133, 135, 137
Perspective, 95
Piano, 25
Picture, balanced, 55
stage, 21, 54
unspoiled, 55
Play, atmosphere of, 103
costume, 80
printed, 89
Plot, hand prop, 118
light, 123, 124, 125, 127, 130, 131
light cue, 130, 131
Plot—(*continued*)
property, 108, 110, 112, 113, 115, 116, 117, 119, 121, 122
scene, 107, 119, 131
side prop, 118
Poise acquisition of, 29
exercises for acquiring, 28
to stand in, 28
vocal, 46
Powder, face, 67, 70, 74
Practical, 124, 130
Projection, effortless, 14
exercises in, 48
Prompt, a, 5
Prompter, 83
Pronunciation, 15, 132, 133
Properties, 61, 85, 110, 121, 122
exchange of, 91
hand, 116
handling of, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115
perishable, 117, 120
picking up, 91
set, 117
side, 115, 116
Proscenium, 84
Psychology, audience, 6, 7
Puff, powder, 68, 70, 75

Qualifications, physical, 20
Quality, vocal, 46

R, burring, 15
Rays, X, 126, 129
Reading, 48, 138
Rehearsals, 51, 52, 61, 83, 86, 89, 94, 110, 123, 124, 136, 139
dress, 61, 64, 65, 90
reading, 87
Repose, physical, 10, 32
Requirements, physical, 16
Resonance, 46
Response, sympathetic, 4
Rising, 39

Road, the, 86, 140
Rôle, emotional, 9
  star, 21
  tragic, 21
Room, dressing, 11, 61, 64, 85
Rouge, blending, 75
  dry, 68, 71, 75
  lip, 71
  wet, 67, 69, 71, 72, 73, 75
Running, 39

Scene, building up a, 4, 6
  front, 107, 131
  living the, 2, 10
  night, 130
  rhythm, of the, 103
  snow, 130
  stealing the, 56
  tempo of, 103
School, dramatic, 137
Screens, gelatine, 126
Script, 89
Self-criticism, 2
Set, 107, 108
Sewing, plain, 25
Shoes, 79
Shoulders, round, 17
Side, O. P., 53, 84
  prompt, 26, 53, 83, 84
Sides, 87
Sight, line of, 99
Signal, warning, 84, 124
Sitting, 2, 29, 39, 55
Skin, fire scarred, 19
  pock marked, 19
Skirt, bustled, 39
  full, 39
  hoop, 39
  trained, 39
Slippers, 79
Smell, back stage, 141
Sobbing, burst of, 60
Spacing, 95
Spectator, emotions of, 96
Speech, 36
  blurred, 12
  defect in, 132
  pauses in, 7
  southern, 14, 17
  stuttering, 17
Spontaneity, 3, 4
Spot, most vital, 96
Spotlight, 57, 124
  baby, 126, 129
Stage, back, 59, 61, 83, 140
  balancing the, 101
  crossing, 60
  dressing the, 55, 56
  English-speaking, 84
  "gives him" the, 56
  going on the, 135, 136, 138
  modern, 2
  taking the, 84
Stagefright, overcoming, 2
Stammering, 17, 49
Stand, 86
  one night, 86
  week, 87
Stick, orange, 73, 75
Stock, playing in, 76
Stove, cosmetic, 67, 75
Strength, vocal, 46
Strike, 85, 122
Strips, 129
Switchboard, 124
  manipulation of, 123

Table, prop, 110, 115
Talkies, 7, 133
Tempo, 9, 24, 94
  rapid, 6
  retarded, 7
Tension, nervous, 1
Terms, lightning, 124
Transitions, 2, 16, 38
Trick, stage, 113

Utility, 21

Values, dramatic, 95
Viewpoint, box-office, 19
Vitality, lack of, 11
Voice, 11
  building up, 11
  emotional, 1, 48, 132
  faulty, 46
  high-pitched, 47
  nuances in, 137
  peculiarity of, 13
  personality in, 13, 133
  pitching, 57
  placing, 11
  professional, 12
  projection of, 12, 13, 47, 56
  quality of, 13
  radio, 132
Voice—(*continued*)
  singing, 25
  southern, 14
  stage, 46
  trained, 12
  unaffected, 133
  volume of, 12, 56

Wait, stage, 58
Wall, fourth, 55, 57
Wardrobe, stock, 77, 78, 79, 80
  street, 80
Whitening, liquid, 68, 76
Wings, 3, 5, 52, 61, 126
Women, character, 79
  leading, 21, 22, 84

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